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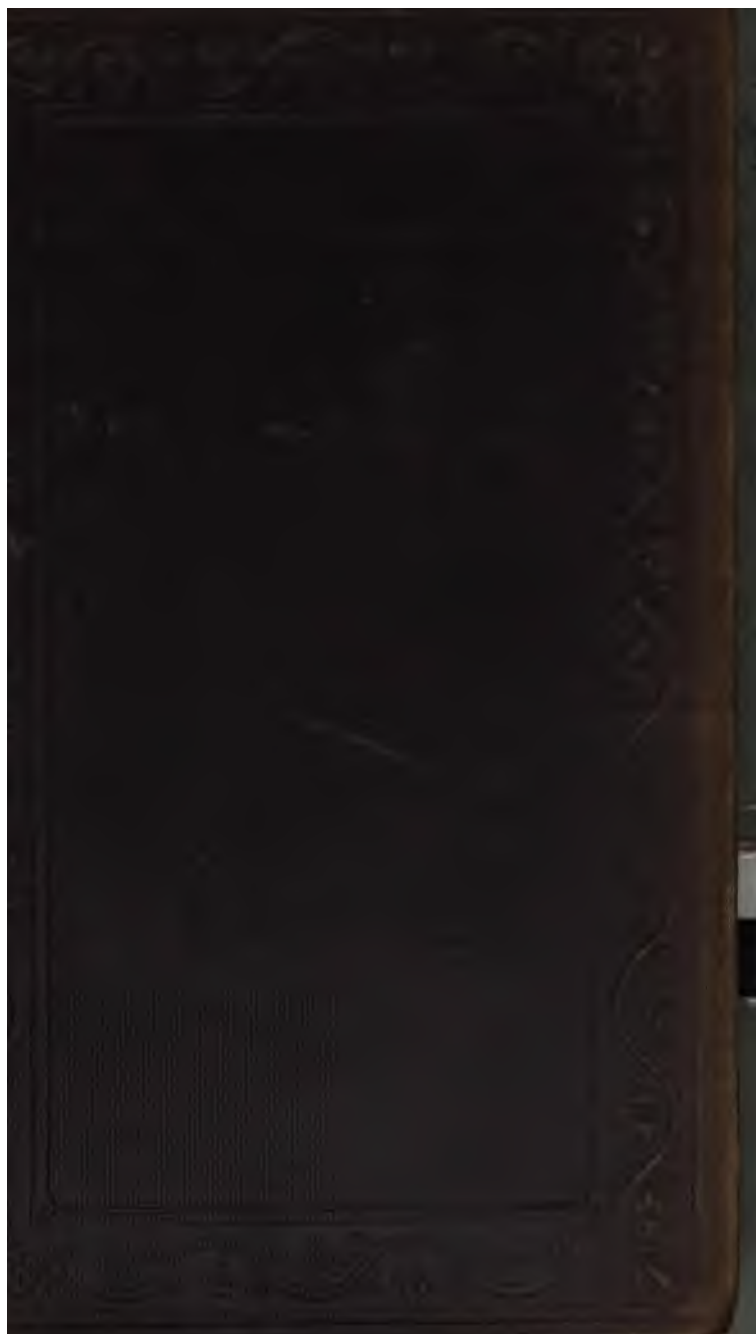
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“ PRESBYTERY EXAMINED.”

“PRESBYTERY EXAMINED:”

AN ESSAY,

CRITICAL AND HISTORICAL,

**ON THE ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY OF SCOTLAND
SINCE THE REFORMATION.**

BY THE DUKE OF ARGYLL.

James Buchanan
SECOND EDITION.

**LONDON:
EDWARD MOXON, DOVER STREET.**

MDCCCXLIX.





LONDON:
BRADBURY AND EVANS, PRINTERS, WHITEFRIARS.

PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION.

THE principal change in this edition is one of form merely. I have divided it into chapters, and supplied an Analytical Table of Contents, which may serve to render plainer the connection between the historical and disquisitional portions of the Essay. I hope it may also tend to fix attention more easily upon the points of prominent importance, both in the narrative and in the argument.

Some passages have been modified, both in the text and in the notes, which had given rise to misapprehension, but in substance there is no material change. I have been glad to find that the general faithfulness of the historical picture has stood various tests. The qualified assent of some has not brought to light any material features which my representation had concealed: nor has the strong disapprobation of others proved exaggeration against those which I have placed in prominent relief.

The conclusions, however, which I conceive this history to illustrate, have been assailed from various and opposite directions. A few points which seemed to call for some special notice, I have commented upon in Appendices at the end of the volume. They have been thus disposed of, (as in the case of the Notes to the first edition,) because I am well aware how tedious all detailed controversies on such subjects are to the great majority of readers. There is one, however, to which I would willingly direct attention. The last number of the "Quarterly Review" contains an article on the following Essay, which I believe I am not wrong in attributing to one who has been a well-known combatant on the field of ecclesiastical controversy, and whose abilities are equally distinguished in literature and politics. No one entertains a higher personal respect for that gentleman than I do; and I thank him very sincerely for the flattering terms in which some portion of his criticism is expressed. But the broad and flagrant misunderstandings in respect to the opinions advocated in this Essay are such, as have caused me great astonishment. These misunderstandings respect such vital points that I have thought it due both to the reviewer and to myself, to bestow upon that article particular attention in Appendix, No. 1. Believing as I do, that the well-known acuteness of this critic is not greater than his wish to deal fairly.

with his subject, I should willingly attribute misapprehensions so great, in some measure at least, to obscurities of my own. But with every reasonable allowance for this source of error, I cannot help thinking that much remains which can only be accounted for by a want of care so great as to be blameable on the part of any man who undertakes to review the writings of another.

I am glad to take this opportunity of explaining, that I by no means attribute to the Episcopalians of Scotland generally, any participation in the spirit which appeared in certain productions of the late "Spottiswoode Society." It is the spirit, indeed, of a very active and prominent section; but of a section which I believe to be small in numbers, and still smaller in moral influence. But in exact proportion as the affectation of nationality is cherished, this spirit will be apt to spread, especially among the clergy; because this ambition tends to reproduce both in principle and in temper, all for which the old "Prelacy" of Scotland was justly odious. No one, indeed, can fear that such a church would ever become formidable. It might be an offence, but not a danger.

I am anxious to add a word of preface also in respect to another body. It would be very erroneous to suppose, that because certain dogmas of the Free Church appear to me to be characterised by great extravagance, I entertain the same opinion of all the feelings and ideas which led to the

secession of 1843. Of the soundness of their claims, as a party in the Established Church, considered in a *constitutional* point of view, and of the fatal blindness of the Government which so long resisted them, no subsequent reflection has altered the opinion I expressed in 1842. Whether a secession and the announcement of such dogmas as I have noticed in the "Catechism," were the only remedies, is a question which it is now too late, and not very profitable to dispute.*

On the other hand, it would be equally erroneous, I believe, to imagine that all who solved this latter question in favour of secession, have any practical belief in the dogmatic expositions to which I have directed attention. A thousand nameless influences, short of a belief in such tenets, go to determine the convictions and the conduct of the great mass in all such popular movements. It is not to be supposed, for instance, that every member of the Free Church, including, as it does, many enlightened men, really believes that the use of the cross in baptism, or that kneeling at the Communion, is an "interference with the Headship of Christ." As little, probably, do many of them believe (though such is in effect the teaching of the "Catechism") that every other deviation from Presbyterian doctrine or ritual, is more or less directly open to the same charge. In truth, there are vast numbers of Free Church-

* See Appendix No. 2.

men who have never seen the "Catechism;" and I have met with some who willingly avoided doing so. It is not, I believe, used in schools; there is a general impression that it is not suited to children; and practically, there is, perhaps, a feeling widely spread, that it is hardly better suited to adults.

But the abstract speculations of the few, react powerfully on the convictions and conduct of the many. When, as in this case, they rank as dogmatic expositions of a principle from which important movements have arisen, and may still arise; and when, farther, they profess to pursue that principle to all its logical consequences, they demand particular attention. They also invite and justify freer handling and discussion than the more practical convictions of individual belief. It has been my object in this Essay, to elucidate great general principles, not to assail any party on lower grounds. I by no means charge against Free Churchmen individually all the extravagance I have freely charged against their dogmas. There is much in their position as a party in which I agreed, and still agree. There is much in their position which I respect. Their doings have been great in effort, if not equally sound in principle, or always happy in effect. It is, indeed, impossible not to wish that they had been less eager to divide, and more anxious to reclaim—less zealous in securing those who belonged to another

Church, and more so in securing those who belonged to none. Yet if there is any blame in this respect, it is a blame which belongs to their theory as much as to their practice. If those who remain in the Established Churches, or in some other Churches which are not Established, are men who deny the "Divine Headship," and "will not that Christ should reign over them," they undoubtedly require conversion, and all the Missionaries whom the Free Church can send.

Yet, although whatever is erroneous or extravagant in the theory itself will long continue, I am persuaded, to bear some bitter fruit, I have full confidence that the evils will abate, and the good increase. With the excitement of a recent contest, much of this exaggeration of idea will subside. Already it is less apparent, and is passing off in the form of Catechisms. The energies of the Free Church cannot fail to turn to better and truer things. In their own body there was one example as great as any in the history of Christian love. There was no period of Dr. CHALMERS' life more illustrious than the last. At the very moment of greatest excitement he proved himself above its influence. There was no contentiousness in *his* zeal. The field he chose was a barren field: the labour he undertook was that of one who reclaims a waste. So old a Missionary setting to so fresh a work, and carrying it on with as much energy as if his step had still been firm, and his age had not

already been the full age of man, is an example which any Church may be proud to follow. If it were more generally followed much zeal would be directed better; much preaching, now comparatively valueless, would become invaluable. There are many such fields, but there are very few such labourers. Yet though the great Missionary of the West Port* is dead, and his zeal was of a purity rare at all times, and especially rare in such moments of contention—it is evident that men of a kindred stamp are not wanting in the same communion. The cause of the RAGGED SCHOOLS is not inferior to that in which the last energies of Chalmers were embarked. From such men and such works, no width of theoretical difference ought to divide our sympathies. No one is more convinced than I am, that the Free Church is an organisation which may effect, if well directed, the most important benefits. The great principles of the Presbyterian Reformation which we hold in common are—in my view at least, if not in theirs—ininitely more important than the dogmatic consequences in which I differ from them. Even

* I ought to explain, probably, to the English reader that the “West Port” was a poor and neglected district of the city of Edinburgh, and that when the “Disruption” relieved Dr. Chalmers of his duties in the University of Edinburgh, he set on foot and himself conducted a Missionary scheme for the education and spiritual instruction of this district—a work to which he devoted all the energy of his enthusiasm and all the warmth of his heart even to the last hours of his life.

with the latter I can sympathise,—at least in imagination. I do not, indeed, consider that the place which they left was another Egypt, nor that their secession was another Exodus. But I am not insensible to the satisfaction which such a view affords, nor am I ignorant of the many old associations through which it may seem as true as it is attractive.

February, 1849.

PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION.

THESE pages seem to require a few words of preface. They were originally intended as a contribution to one of our periodical Reviews: but the great difficulty of dealing fairly with the subject in so confined a space, has led me to adopt a different mode of publication—though, for convenience, I have retained the form in which the Essay was originally cast.

Its great object is to give a comprehensive sketch of the principles and tendencies of the Scottish Reformation; to distinguish those which are primary and essential, from those which, being the growth of accidental circumstances, are local in their origin, and as local in their meaning; and especially to point out the value of the former in the existing controversies of the Christian Church.

In drawing up such a view, and presenting it to the English public, it is right to acknowledge that as a Presbyterian I cannot pretend to be free from that influence which personal and family associations must always, more or less, exert. But that it is not such

as would be written by a mere partisan of Presbytery, I leave to itself to prove—certain that in many respects it will meet, not with the approbation, but the censure, of the most zealous members of that communion. I have adopted some opinions which cannot fail to be obnoxious to those with whom every tradition of their Church is sacred. But I shall be more than recompensed for the disapprobation of such—much as I respect them—if I have redeemed the history of Presbytery from the prejudice which some of these traditions have cast upon it, in the eyes of more impartial judges :—if I have vindicated its character from its own representation of itself, by extricating the great principles on which its system was deeply founded, from the inflated language, and provincial dogmas, in which they have been too long misrepresented to the world.

I have long felt that many of the forms in which Presbyterians have been wont to express certain of their principles, are most illogical and fallacious in themselves, and are calculated to produce the most erroneous impression on the nature and constitution of the Presbyterian Church. It has, in consequence, been often with regret, but never with surprise, that I have seen Englishmen mistaking totally the nature of its claims, and condemning them as but a new form of the claims of priesthood. Under concealment of the dogmas, of which I have here endeavoured to explain the origin and meaning, it was difficult for Dr. Arnold to recognise the true principles of Scottish

Presbytery on the nature of "The Church"—principles which were, in fact, his own ! *

As I have had before me, throughout this Essay, a much larger object than a mere defence of Presbytery, so also have I had before me one much larger than a mere attack on Episcopacy. I speak here of Episcopacy in the abstract ;—not of Episcopacy as it was represented in Scotland from the Reformation to the Revolution—neither of certain principles which are now prevalent both in England and in the Scottish branch of the English Church. Against these—against the course of "Prelacy" in Scotland up to 1688—against the principles and the spirit which animated that course, and which still flourish I am afraid, on both sides of Tweed,—it certainly is one object of this Essay to enter a protest. Believing, as I do, that the great value of Presbytery is in the witness it bore against those principles, and in the triumph it obtained over them, I could not discuss the one subject without discussing the other also.

But I am anxious to disclaim, at the very outset,

* "I hold this to be one of the most mischievous falsehoods ever broached—that the government of the Christian Church is vested by Divine right in *the clergy*, and that the close corporation of Bishops and Presbyters (whether one or more makes no difference) is, and ever ought to be, the representative of the Christian Church. *Holding this doctrine* as the very corner stone of my political belief, I am equally opposed to Popery, High Churchism, and the *claims of the Scotch Presbyterians*." Arnold here shows that he considered the claims of all the three parties to rest upon the same principle, viz. that of Priesthood. I shall show how wholly erroneous this view is, in point of *fact*, as regards the claims of Presbytery.—*Arnold's Life and Correspondence*, Vol. ii., p. 184.

any hostile feeling against Episcopacy in the abstract, or against the English Church in particular. Those who regard the principles to which I have above alluded, as essential to Episcopacy rightly understood, will of course value this disclaimer at what it is worth to them. I shall be content, however, if it be accepted by those members of the English Church whose opinions are less confined;—who, indeed, look on their own as a true, pure, and well-ordered Church—sound in her faith—devotional in her services,—and, on the whole, happy in her government; but who are free from the delusion that, in all these respects, she stands alone, or the still more flattering delusion that she is the only “Church” at all, among the communions of the Reformed. If the disavowal I have made be accepted by such members of the English Church, it will have been accepted by those who represent the opinions of her own first Reformers. To such as prefer more exclusive claims, it is not addressed. The principles on which those claims rest, and the consequences to which they lead, have been indelibly marked on the history of Scotland. They blasted all they touched. They dried up every green thing. They covered the country with passion, extravagance, and crime. They exposed Christianity on both sides to every sort of caricature, and scandal, and reproach. I believe them to be of evil tendency at all times and under all circumstances; but in Scotland they were peculiarly the growth of egotism and passion—bad in their origin, worse in their result.

An historical form has been given to one Part of the Essay, for two reasons; first, to support and explain the view taken of the course of Presbyterian principle; and, secondly, to give as much general interest as possible to a subject which many will think dry at best. As regards the first reason, it is impossible to follow the progress of opinion in the Scottish Church, without attending to the order of events from which their development arose. And as, on this subject, I have presented a view differing in important points from that which Presbyterians have generally given, and clashing with the fundamental principles of no less important a branch of the Presbyterian communion than the Free Church, it was the more necessary to recapitulate those historical facts on which the opinion I have taken rests.

And here I would observe, that in the historical portion of the Essay I make no pretension to novelty, or to more than ordinary research into contemporary documents. I have intentionally avoided controverted facts. Where there is any peculiarity in the interpretation put on historical events, it is the more important that those events themselves should be such as have been already well established, and admit of no dispute. I have not therefore departed, as to facts, from the track which is known and beaten. The view I have taken of the ecclesiastical history of Scotland, and the opinions I have founded on it, have not tempted me to any more doubtful treatment of the subject. They do not rest on facts which are new,

nor on known facts artificially put together. They seem to me the plain and true reading of a plain and true story, and as such I wish them to be judged.

The second reason assigned for giving to much of the Essay an historical form, will account for the freedom with which I have travelled beyond the immediate bounds of Scotland, whenever, for the purposes of illustration or of argument, I have been tempted to do so. In histories,—I will not say of greater importance,—but of greater general interest than the present,—glimpses of men and of events, of other countries and of other times, tend to enliven and refresh the scene. They do more—they give connection to our knowledge. Especially in so large a subject as that before us, such excursions are not irrelevant. With such an event as the Reformation, whether in one country or another, all past times may be said to stand in immediate connection. It was an epoch in God's Church on earth; and the history of that Church begins with Adam. It was an epoch in the history of the human mind, and that history is continuous, without a break—connecting itself with all times and with all great events. There are few subjects of highest interest to which we may not find natural and easy access through the gates of the Reformation.

I have now only to add a few words in explanation of the text chosen for these pages. The work of which they were intended as a Review, is one published under the title of "Presbytery Examined,"

the author being a certain Right Rev. John Sage, who was a Bishop in the Scotch Episcopal Church, and died in 1711. It has been momentarily rescued from oblivion by being republished under the auspices of a body calling itself the "Spottiswoode Society." In originally selecting this work as the occasion of the Essay, I was not, certainly, determined by the importance of the book, or by the celebrity of the Society to which we owe its republication. The one is a controversial work of the times of the Revolution, with all the spite, dulness, and prolixity of such controversies at such a time. The other is a body of which probably most of my readers have never heard. Nevertheless, there are circumstances connected with both which rendered the selection natural. Presbytery "examined" by a Bishop—any Bishop—stands more than an equal chance of being examined only on one side, and of having even that side not treated with perfect justice. But when the "examining" Bishop is a Scotch Bishop, and one who suffered personally from its triumph, we may guess with great precision the charge of the Judge, and the finding of his court. That of JEFFRIES on the Western Circuit, could not have been foretold more certainly. On such a trial the black cap is inseparable from the lawn sleeves. Yet there is something in SAGE's charge which is uncommon in its line of argument. It is one which may be turned to some account in forming our own judgment, and correcting his.

As regards the Society above named, it seemed to

me appropriate on account of its name, and also of its spirit. The name is that of a man who was first a Presbyterian minister; who was next—a thing for which there is no name except in Scotland, where it was called a “Tulchan;” * who was, thirdly, a duly consecrated Archbishop (of St. Andrews); who was, fourthly, an agent of Charles I. in his famous follies in Scotland about a Liturgy; and who, lastly, was expelled from his native country, amidst the shouts of its people, as one of the chief of its oppressors. This is the name chosen by a Society which professes to represent the Episcopal Church in Scotland. The choice is at least candid: the history of the man

* “James the Sixth’s pretended bishops were, by the Scotch people, devisedly called ‘Tulchan Bishops.’ Did the reader ever see, or fancy in his mind, a Tulchan? Tulchan is, or rather was—for the thing is long since obsolete—a calf-skin stuffed into the rude similitude of a calf;—similar enough to deceive the imperfect perceptive organs of a cow. At milking-time the Tulchan, with head duly bent, was set as if to suck; the fond cow, looking round, fancied that the calf was busy, and that all was right, and so gave her milk freely, which the cunning maid was streaming in white abundance into her pail, all the while. The Scotch milkmaid in those days cried, ‘Where is the Tulchan—is the Tulchan ready?’ So of the Bishops. Scotch lairds were eager enough to *milk the Church-lands and titles*—to get the rents out of them freely, which was not always easy. They were glad to construct a *Form* of Bishops to please the King, and the Church, and make the milk come without disturbance. The reader now knows what a ‘Tulchan Bishop’ was—a piece of mechanism constructed, not without difficulty, in Parliament and King’s Councils among the Scotch, and torn asunder afterwards with dreadful clamour, and scattered to the four winds, so soon as the cow became awake to it.”—*Carlyle’s Cromwell*, Vol. I., p. 64-5.

is a literally correct epitome of the history of the Church.

But to conclude. I have selected the "Spottiswoode Society" because of its spirit. Its republications are full of editorial notes, which must be seen to be appreciated. I shall only mention one, as a specimen of the rest. It is, of course, part of the principles of the gentlemen who form the editing committee, as it is of their communion generally, that to it, and it alone, belong the name and the privileges of "The Church." But it is difficult sometimes, in common parlance, to avoid giving this title to Presbytery, which, by those uninstructed in "Catholic principles," is vulgarly called the Church of Scotland. Various expedients are resorted to by "Churchmen" to avoid this dangerous abandonment of principle. Frequently, I have observed, it is done by adopting the old Scotch form of the same word—"the Kirk." But in the note to which I refer, the object is attained by the more splenetic periphrasis of "that form of schism which is established in Scotland."

This temper I regard as inherited from the history, and consistent with the principles, of the Church to which these gentlemen belong. With this history, and with these principles, this Essay has necessarily much to do in tracing the history of Scottish Presbytery. At the same time, as it has been my object to impart as much general interest as possible to the subject, and as in order to this end, it was indispensable that the following pages should not have

the character of a mere controversial dispute, I have not encumbered the text with any reference to the productions of the "Spottiswoode Society," except where they bring prominently under notice the principles and history of "Prelacy" in Scotland. I have also excluded from the text, and embodied in Notes, at the end of the volume, some detailed discussion of important questions, in which I differ from Presbyterians of the Free Church school.

But apart from all such discussions, which are little likely to arrest attention beyond the limits of Scotland, I believe the history of Presbytery in that country to present interests of the largest nature, and illustrate principles of the most universal application. It is my anxious hope that this Essay may contribute to render these more appreciated by rendering them better understood amongst the English public.

August, 1848.

CONTENTS.

PART I.

CHAPTER I.—PAGE 1—21.

INTRODUCTORY.

	PAGE
LEADING chronological epochs from the Reformation to the Revolution	5
Introduction of the Reformation opinions into Scotland, and Martyrdom of P. Hamilton . . .	7
Bearing of previous and contemporary European events on the progress and character of the Scottish Reformation	8—11
The last Martyrdom—that of Milne	12
Principles which appear forming:—Knox's letters from Geneva	12—15
Connection of the Crown of Scotland with the House of Guise, and its bearings	15—17
Outline of the life of J. Knox from his conversion to the year 1560	17—21

CHAPTER II.—PAGE 22—52.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE REFORMATION ; AND PRINCIPLES LAID DOWN THEREAT.

Meeting of the Estates	22
The First Confession of Faith	23
Intolerance, and its explanation	24—25
First "Book of Discipline," and its reception . . .	26—30

	PAGE
Its definition of "The Church"	30—31
Inconsistencies observable	31—34
Un-priestly idea of the nature of the Ministerial office, and its relation to the Laity	34—37
Idea of the distinction between "Church and State" not observable ; and why	37—43
The First, compared with the Second, "Book of Dis- cipline," in respect to this	43
Nature of this change, and its cause examined . .	43—46
Construction to be put on the language of Presby- tery, respecting the independence of the Church	46—47
Composition of the first General Assemblies . .	47—50
Organisation and working of the Presbyterian sys- tem : "Superintendency," &c.	50—52

CHAPTER III.—PAGE 53—84.

HISTORICAL SKETCH, EMBRACING THE TWO FIRST PERIODS, 1560—84—92.

Summary	53—54
The death of Francis II. of France,—its conse- quences,—and Queen Mary's policy after her arrival in Scotland	55—56
Her rupture with Queen Elizabeth ; and its effects .	56—58
The Regencies : nature of the contests during them : connection of the Catholic party with France, and of the Protestant party with England ; the part taken by the Presbyterian Church . . .	58—61
The origin and progress of the "Tulchan" Episco- pacy, and of the contests arising therefrom . .	61—69
Letter from the General Assembly to the Regent Morton	69—70
Arrival of Andrew Melville ; sketch of his life ; Society he had met at Geneva, and his character	70—74
Second Book of Discipline ; continuation of the con- test with the Tulchan Episcopacy, and its ter- mination for a time in the "Black Acts" of 1584	74—79

Effects of this period on the feelings and principles of the Presbyterian Church	79—82
Favourable change in the disposition of the Crown, and Statutes of 1592	82—84

CHAPTER IV.—PAGE 85—102.

HISTORICAL SKETCH CONTINUED FROM THE STATUTES OF 1592
TO THE ACCESSION OF JAMES VI. TO THE THRONE OF
ENGLAND, 1603.

Renewal of the contest between the Crown and the Presbyterian Church	85—90
Further change in the Principles of Presbytery, respecting the nature and extent of ecclesiastical authority	90—98
Continued contest with the Crown; and further steps of James towards the re-establishment of the Tulchan Episcopacy	98—102

CHAPTER V.—PAGE 103—132.

HISTORICAL SKETCH CONTINUED FROM THE UNION OF THE
CROWNS, 1603, TO THE COVENANT, AND GLASGOW ASSEM-
BLY OF 1638.

Renewed exertions of the Crown: imposition of the “ Five Articles of Faith ”	103—106
Accession of Charles I., and new aspect of the con- test under him: third stage of the history of Scottish Prelacy	106—107
Fabrication, imposition, and reception of the Liturgy in Scotland	107—113
Appearance and history of Alex. Henderson; and progress of the contest to the Swearing of the Covenant	113—125
From the Covenant to the meeting of the General Assembly at Glasgow in 1638	125—132

CHAPTER VI.—PAGE 133—166.

RETROSPECT ON THE PRINCIPLES DEVELOPED DURING THE
PRECEDING PERIODS.

	PAGE
Definition of fanaticism : the causes of its rise, progress, and of the direction it took in Scotland, considered	133—148
A parallel transition in the spirit and principles of the English Church	148—153
Change of the "Tulchan" into genuine Episcopacy, and its bearings	153—156
Dogmatic formula ("Headship of Christ") selected by Presbytery to express its claims of Spiritual Independence	156—157
Connection of ideas traced in this selection	157—158
The connection arbitrary, not logical	158—166

CHAPTER VII.—PAGE 167—198.

HISTORICAL SKETCH CONTINUED FROM THE GLASGOW ASSEMBLY
OF 1638 TO THE RESTORATION, 1660.

Commencement of the Civil War, and its progress to the conclusion of the "Solemn League and Covenant"	167—172
Collision with Independency in the Westminster Assembly, and its effects	172—175
Origin, progress, and result of the antagonism between the fanaticism of English Puritanism and that of Scottish Presbytery	175—183
Outbreak of the "Second Civil War;" triumph of Cromwell, and his reception in Scotland	183—186
Death of Charles I., and final rupture between Cromwell and Presbytery	186—189
Conduct of Scottish Presbytery, from this period to the death of the Protector, considered	189—198

CHAPTER VIII.—PAGE 199—209.

GLANCE AT THE PERIOD FROM THE RESTORATION, 1660, TO THE
REVOLUTION, 1688.

	PAGE
Re-introduction of Episcopacy, and the aspect in which it appeared	199—200
Robert Leighton : his history, character, efforts, and resignation	200—202
Administration of Episcopacy in Scotland under Charles II. and James II.	202—203
Conduct of the Scottish Bishops at the Revolution, and their ejection	203—208
Value of the triumph of Presbyterianism	208—209

PART II.

CHAPTER I.—PAGE 210—247.

EXAMINATION OF THE EXISTING DEVELOPMENTS OF PRESBYTERY
AND PRELACY IN SCOTLAND.

Relevancy of the history previously traced to the controversies of the present day	210—211
Language of modern Presbyterianism	211—212
Its consistency with the fundamental principle of the Presbyterian Church	212—215
Free-Church Catechism	215—217
Real value and meaning of Presbyterian principles	217—220
Disruption of 1843	221—222
The Episcopal Church in Scotland, and its aspirations	222—228
Estimate formed of the Reformation by the Prelatic school, considered	228—244
Its dangerous tendency — Conversions to Ro- manism, &c.	244—247

CHAPTER II.—PAGE 248—278.

DISCUSSION ON THE PRINCIPLE OF PRIESTHOOD, WITH REFERENCE TO THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

	PAGE
Their effect on Christian civilisation in the Middle Ages; Scepticism of the 15th century	248—257
Value of the Reformation having been effected in defiance of clerical authority	257—259
Sacerdotal principles, in respect to Christian Ministry, tend to doctrinal corruption, and how	259—267
False contrast drawn between the Scottish and English Reformation	267—271
Character of the Anglican Reformation—in what its value did, and in what it did not consist,—considered	271—278

CHAPTER III.—PAGE 279—294.

CONCLUSION.

Review of Presbyterian principle on the nature of "The Church:" its affinity with the idea of Dr. Arnold	279—281
Its bearings, doctrinally, politically, ecclesiastically	282—284
Observations on the Doctrine and Worship of the Presbyterian Church	284—292
Some prejudices accounted for	292—293
Conclusion	293—294

APPENDIX	295
NOTES	349

ESSAY
ON THE ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY OF
SCOTLAND
SINCE THE REFORMATION.

PART I.



CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

THE ecclesiastical history of Scotland, since the Reformation, is one which bears, assuredly, no inviting aspect. To those even who know it best, it is a picture of which the lines are harsh, the colours dark, and the effect disquieting. Out of Scotland it has accordingly remained but little known, and still less understood. Certain prominent persons and events have indeed commanded the notice of the world ; but these have not been of a character which can be called attractive. There are none, of course, who have not heard of KNOX, or who have not formed for themselves some idea of the harsh features of that stern Reformer. There are none to whom the Covenant is an unknown name, or who have not conceived some notion of the men who sung psalms among the hills, with the sword in the one hand and the Bible in the other. But it was an evil complained of by Lord Clarendon—and a most bitter evil it proved to be—that in England there was more knowledge of,

and interest in, the transactions of Germany and Spain, than in those which took place in the streets of Edinburgh. And though circumstances have greatly changed since the days of Charles I., it may be questioned whether the genius and history of Scottish ecclesiastical institutions are now much more accurately known. In some respects there is even less appreciation of their scope and spirit. Many causes have contributed to this result. The antagonist principles, which fought *against* and *in* them, are still at war. Their history has lain too exclusively in the hands of enemies or disciples. No philosophic German has stepped in to divide the combatants—to seize the spirit of Scottish Presbytery without being influenced by its prejudices—to point to its errors without being urged by enmity. It were earnestly to be wished that this were otherwise. Forbidding as its aspect may appear, there are few pages in the whole book of history more full of interest and instruction. Those who approach it must indeed be prepared to meet with much from which they would gladly turn away. Scenes of civil turbulence and religious bigotry—the hardness of dogmatic intolerance, and the excesses of a wild fanaticism, are features with which they must consent to become familiar. But on the other hand, they will be abundantly rewarded—unless blinded by the more odious bigotry of modern times—by the noblest scenes of unbending firmness in adherence to important principle—by the prominence of many liberal and enlightened sentiments—by the great value of some ideas respecting the nature of “the Church,” and by

the intimate connection between the growth of Scottish Presbytery and the advancement of civil and religious liberty.

The ecclesiastical history of Scotland, from the Reformation to the Revolution, naturally divides itself into six periods of unequal duration, which, for the sake of clearness, we shall present thus :—

1st,	from 1560 to 1584,	a period of 24 years.
2nd,	" 1584 " 1592,	" 8 "
3rd,	" 1592 " 1603,	" 11 "
4th,	" 1603 " 1638,	" 35 "
5th,	" 1638 " 1660,	" 22 "
6th,	" 1660 " 1688,	" 28 "

Into the seventh period, that which extends from the Revolution to the present time, I do not propose to enter.

This division is not arbitrary. Not only does each of these dates represent some great crisis or event in the affairs of the Reformed Church of Scotland, (some of them, as will be seen, in those of the Empire also); but they form the regular alternate steps which mark the successive triumph and depression of her distinctive principles. This remarkable history may be said to be one long determined struggle, interrupted only by occasional lulls, between two great rival systems; and the above dates are those at which each, in turn, either actually acquired the ascendant, or virtually did so by the occurrence of events which gave some decided preponderance of power. The Episcopalian will remark upon these dates that those which coincide with the triumphs of Presbytery are in several instances those which are

also memorable for civil anarchy and successful rebellion : whilst the Presbyterian will observe, in reference to the same epochs, that whilst the triumph of his opponents is contemporary with that of civil tyranny and unconstitutional oppression, the successes of his own Church are identified with the great steps in the progress of civil and religious liberty, and form epochs for ever memorable in the advancement of human government.

For my own part, I am not disposed to put any forced or party-interpretation upon these coincidences of date. They do not indicate that there is any *necessary* connection between Episcopacy and despotic oppression on the one hand, or between Presbytery and democratic violence on the other. We have seen that the latter has flourished long and peacefully under the settled government and limited Monarchy of Britain ; and that Episcopacy, though somewhat modified in form, has retained all its vigour under the Republics of America. But this connection of events does indicate a truth of immense importance in the particular history now before us : that whereas Episcopacy has, in Scotland, had its chief support *ab extra* in reference to the body of the people, Presbytery had its roots *within* it. There is no ground for any more general conclusion. But it is well that we observe this rough outline, as it were, on the map of history, which shows, at the first glance, how Presbytery was opposed in Scotland to arbitrary power, because (if for no other reason) arbitrary power was in Scotland opposed to it : whilst, on the other hand, Episcopacy in the same country

was identified therewith, because *there* it was its child and creature.

The history of Scotland, from the Reformation to the Revolution, is almost entirely occupied by the struggles of Presbytery against these two allies. It is a history full of intricacy and details. I propose to give only its principal events, preserving their connection; and, as during the first two periods into which the whole history is above divided, nearly all the tendencies had become developed, which continue throughout to influence affairs, I shall dwell more carefully on these, and pass more rapidly over those that follow. In fixing, however, on the year 1560 as the date of the Reformation, I take the period of its triumph and national establishment. There is a previous period of course, and one of no small importance—that in which this triumph was preparing. On this it is essential to bestow some preliminary attention.

The principles of the Reformation had shone on individuals in Scotland at a very early period after their first appearance. It was only eight years after Leo X. had issued the memorable Bull which excommunicated Martin Luther, and Charles V. had summoned the great Diet of the Empire for checking the progress of the new opinions, that Scotland saw the first witness to their truth. The former events happened, as is well known, in 1520. Patrick Hamilton was burnt at St. Andrews in 1528. But ere those principles gained their full ascendancy in Scotland, more than thirty years had yet to run; and great was the change which those years brought

with them, not in Scotland only, but the world. The period immediately succeeding 1520 is indeed one of remarkable transition. In a few years we pass at once from the politics of the middle age, and enter those of modern history. Taking leave of the former in scenes congenial with its character,—on the Field of the Cloth of Gold—in the proud rivalries of Francis and of Charles—in the fierce battles of their respective chivalries on the plains of Italy—in the death of Bayard—in the capture at Pavia,—we suddenly enter on a period after the Peace of Cambray, during which the whole wars and politics of Europe take an entirely new direction. A new element had appeared, new principles of action had begun to work. The great contests of the world were no longer to be fought for the same possessions—the bays of sunny Naples, the vineyards of Florence, or the Dukedom of Milan. They were to concern The Faith. Long before 1560, this transition had become complete. On the Continent, and in our own island, the scene had been entirely changed. In 1528, the first struggles of the Protestants of Germany were still pending, and some of their greatest dangers were yet to come. In England, Henry VIII had but lately become tired of Catherine of Arragon, and was still Defender of the Roman Faith. In Scotland, any real danger to the established religion was hardly feared. The thunder had been heard growling in the distance; but the storm had not yet gathered overhead. One heretic had appeared, but he was burnt; and John Knox was only about to take orders in the Church,

which it was the after-business of his life to overthrow.

In 1560, almost all the chief actors on that memorable stage had passed away. Henry VIII. and Francis I.—Luther and Leo—all were gone. Nor had intermediate scenes been wanting, of equal interest and importance. No twelvemonth of that eventful time was without its own eventful history. Two reigns had passed in England. The Reformation there had been fostered under the gentle Christianity of the youthful Edward, and since subjected to the fiery trial of the Marian persecution. Cranmer had had his turn of burning and being burnt. On the Continent, Protestantism had not only already almost attained its full extent of conquest, but the great Catholic reaction had begun. Ignatius Loyola had devised his wonderful weapon for the Church. The Order of Jesus had gone forth conquering and to conquer; and four years before the date at which our periods begin, their great founder had already closed his extraordinary career.

During the same thirty years changes not less important had occurred in the civil history of Scotland. The marriage of James V. had been the subject of anxious contest to the rival courts of France and England; and like almost all the political transactions of the time, this contest had derived its chief importance from its bearings on the interests of the Church. The strenuous exertions made by Henry VIII. after his final rupture with the Roman See, to fortify his influence on the side of Scotland by a matrimonial alliance between James

and the Princess Mary, were as strenuously opposed by all the powers of the Papal Court to secure an alliance which might check the advance of heresy and schism. The clergy of Scotland warmly seconded the exertions of the Pontiff; and indeed they had now some cause to be alarmed. Seven years only had elapsed since that pestilent heretic, Hamilton, had been burnt, and each year had called for new examples. Their fears were reasonable; Henry however failed; the legate and the clergy gained their suit. In 1535, James passed over into France, and on the 1st of January, 1536, espoused the young and beautiful daughter of Francis I. The aisles of Nôtre Dame were graced on this occasion by the presence of three sovereigns; and seven high representatives of the Roman Court seemed to pronounce upon the union the blessings of the Church. It perhaps had been well for Scotland had this Princess lived; but the melancholy interest of a fatal disease had long been observed in the countenance of Magdalene, and scarcely had James been settled in his kingdom when the worst anticipations were fulfilled. But this event only made way for an alliance still more satisfactory to the Roman Church, and before a year of his widowhood had expired, James had espoused in the Cathedral of St. Andrews a daughter of the great House of Guise. This was the mother of Mary Queen of Scots, and the future Regent of the kingdom. The death of James V. in 1542, devolved upon an infant girl the crown of Scotland, and after a short period during which the Earl of Arran held the Regency, the reins passed

into the hands of her ambitious and intriguing mother.

It is not without special reference to the subject immediately before us that I have taken this rapid review of European events. The men who effected the revolution of 1560 had lived in times which deeply influenced their principles and conduct. The Protestants of Scotland had learned to look with the most intense interest to the transactions of the Continent. The progress of the Reformed opinions had raised their courage, the Catholic reaction had roused their fears; and we shall find a panic-dread of the efforts of the Roman Church as an aggressive and not a defensive power—and in particular of the insidious approaches of the Order of Jesus—a prominent feature in the scenes which follow. Nearer home they had been necessarily led to regard a foreign Prince as their natural protector, and to view the politics of their own country through the one absorbing medium of religion. They had been strengthened by the refugees from the Marian persecution, and by the not less powerful influence of martyrdom among themselves. In no country, perhaps, was the saying more signally fulfilled, that the blood of the Martyrs is the seed of the Church. Attachment to the established religion seems to have sat but lightly on the Scottish people. The clergy had no hold—and deserved none—in their reverence and affection. Their authority therefore wanted the support of prevailing sentiment. The severities exercised on heretics had consequently excited pity, without inspiring fear; and only served to rouse

attention to a cause for which such suffering was so willingly endured. Those who in early life had mingled in the crowd which surrounded the stake of young Patrick Hamilton at St. Andrews, and had witnessed his heroic death with astonishment or commiseration only, had learned to view with the feelings of a nearer sympathy the sufferings of every new confessor, until at last the death of the aged Milne on the same spot, in 1558, was met by an universal shout of decisive indignation.

Nothing, indeed, could have been more inopportune than this last outrage of the Roman priesthood. They mistook the time which had arrived, and the men with whom they had to do. Yet several months before the death of Milne, the Protestants had given in a petition to the Regent which cast some light on both. Besides seeking, or rather demanding, the free exercise and the free preaching of their faith,—besides intimating also the necessity of a thorough reformation of the lives and of the teaching of the priesthood,—that petition contained in its preface a most remarkable announcement. They said that it wounded and grieved their consciences to remember that many of their brethren had of late years been stricken with fire and sword, because “they acknowledged it to have been their bounden duty before God, either to have DEFENDED their brethren, or openly to have testified their faith along with them.” And in December, 1557, they had embodied these principles in a bond or covenant amongst themselves, in which, speaking of their ministers, they had used these words, “We shall maintain them, and nourish

them and DEFEND them." Already were the boldest principles of political right roused by the apprehension of religious truth. The Protestants included a number of the nobility, and a still larger number of the lesser barons. They were therefore part of the established power or authority of the realm, and as such they claimed a right not only to resist the tyranny of oppressive rulers, or of deceiving priests, but to press for a public reformation of the Church.

Such were the opinions already common, when the martyrdom of Milne occurred. And to the flames of his pile, were added incitements of another kind. John Knox issued, from Geneva, addresses to the "Nobility, State, and Commonalty of the Realm." Perhaps there are no productions of that extraordinary man which give a clearer view of his earnest, daring mind. In repeated passages of the most rapid and impassioned eloquence, he adjures them to put an end to the reign of idols, and the "tyranny of Antichrist." He had himself been condemned and burnt in effigy. He appealed to them. He had a right to do so; and they were bound to hear him. For "it was lawful for God's Ministers to appeal from the sentence of the visible Church to the knowledge of the temporal magistrate—who by God's Law is bound to defend them from tyranny." Did they doubt it? Did not Jeremiah, commissioned to prophesy the desolation of Jerusalem for the sins of the priests, the prophets, and the people—and sentenced by them to death for doing so—did he not appeal to the Princes of Judah? And did they not "pass up to the King's House, to the Temple of the Lord," and sit in judgment and deliver

him? And did not St. Paul appeal from the priests and Jews even to a heathen Emperor? But perhaps they sheltered themselves under the plea that ecclesiastical things did not belong to them, but exclusively to priests? This was one of Satan's delusions for the maintenance of his own power. "To the Civil Magistrate specially appertained the ordering and reformation of Religion," and this he would prove by the examples and the precepts of the word of God. Was not Aaron made to depend on Moses? Did he not derive his sanctification and inauguration from him? And did not all the godly Kings of Judah overrule the priesthood when corruption required them to do so? Did not Asa and Jehoshaphat, did not Hezekiah and Josiah, exercise their kingly powers in reforming religion? And if this was the right and the duty of civil power, even in the days of Aaron's priesthood, which was the type of Christ himself, "who dare esteem that the civil power is now become so profane in God's eyes, that it is sequestered from all intromission with matters of religion?" Or, again—did they excuse themselves because they were not Kings or Emperors, but only "nobles and states of a realm?" As such, they were still rulers; or, in the language of the Old Testament, princes and judges of the earth. On them lay the same duties as on Kings. Nor did the fact of their sovereign being ignorant of the true religion, make any difference in the case. Kings gainsaying the truth were to be resisted. The sin of false and idolatrous teaching was one in which all were implicated who did not strive for its suppression; and this duty lay not on

Kings only, neither on nobles only, neither on any other authority alone, but on the whole body of the people, and on every soul of man. And this was the meaning of that order in the Mosaic Law, concerning the building and sustaining of the Tabernacle, which at first sight might seem so strange, where God commanded that every man should pay the same sum—the rich not more, the poor not less. And this, too, He orders of all those who now possess the true Tabernacle, of which the other was but the type. The signs of that spiritual Tabernacle, and of its presence with us, were the true preaching of Christ's Word, and the right administration of His Sacraments—"to the maintenance whereof was no less bound the subject than the prince—the poor than the rich."

Such were the tendencies of opinion which internal events had now developed. Nor were the political transactions I have noticed of less consequence as affecting the character of the Scottish Reformation. I need hardly point out the influence of a connection, such as we have seen formed by James V., or the necessary consequences of the Regent of Scotland being a sister of the Cardinal of Lorraine and the Duke of Guise. At the very time when the Reformed opinions had come to be most widely spread, and to number amongst their disciples some of the most powerful nobles, the influence of Catholic counsel became most decisively predominant in the government of their country. The great agents of the Catholic reaction in France, and the founders of the famous League, were not likely to

leave so good an opportunity unimproved of effecting their designs. But, fortunately for Scotland, their attempts were made too late. The Protestants of Scotland were now in a position to repel force by force. The elevation of Mary of Guise to the Regency had not been altogether, on one side at least, the matter of religion which we might expect it to have been. Members of the Protestant party had even supported her in her intrigues to undermine the authority of the Earl of Arran, whose weak and vacillating character had indeed long ceased to represent the interests of the Reformed. The Queen Regent's government began in 1554, and such was the strength of that party, that she never felt herself in a sufficiently strong position to take any active measures. The adherents of both religions supported equally her administration for a while; and we even find the names of some Protestant leaders amongst the Commissioners who effected an arrangement of the greatest importance to the schemes of the House of Guise—the marriage of the young Queen of Scots to the Dauphin of France. This event occurred in 1558, and the same year a new actor appears upon the stage—Elizabeth of England. No one understood better than this extraordinary woman the real objects of her enemies, or the true interest of herself. But without the assistance of her sagacity, or the influence of her intrigues, the Protestants of Scotland must speedily have discovered the dangers which were gathering around them. No sooner was the marriage of her daughter effected, the crown matrimonial granted

to the Dauphin, and the assistance of the Reformed no longer needed, than Mary of Guise, under the influence of her brothers, threw off the mask, and in the same important year measures of coercion were begun. But it was too late. In 1559 the leading Protestant nobility withdrew, and armed; and before the close of the ensuing year, the Regent had been deposed, and a numerous and united Parliament triumphantly established the Reformed religion.

It forms no part of my design to enter into any biographical detail in reference to the men who were the chief agents in this short and tumultuous, but decisive contest. I must retrace my steps, however, for a moment, to introduce some of them to the acquaintance of the reader; and in particular, any sketch, however slight, of the Scottish Reformation, must be essentially imperfect, without some notice of the man to whom his country owed, in so principal a degree, the establishment of the truth. Others of his countrymen had, indeed, long preceded Knox; and I have already mentioned, that at the date of the first martyrdom in the Reformed cause—that of Patrick Hamilton—he was only about to become a member of the Romish priesthood. It seems to have been about the year of James V.'s death, 1542, that he first publicly avowed the alteration of his faith. He was then teaching in the University of St. Andrews; but that Archiepiscopal see was then occupied by a man near whom no heretic could safely live. Proud, able, profligate, and cruel, Cardinal Beaton was the determined enemy of the Reformed. Knox withdrew, and until the year 1547 acted as

tutor to the sons of two country gentlemen in East Lothian—the Lairds of Langniddrie and Ormiston. In the year previous to that just mentioned, 1546, two most remarkable events had happened. A man who had been driven into England seven years before, as a suspected heretic, had been then, for three years, restored to his country, and had been employing his time in strengthening his brethren, and gaining new converts to the truth. He appears to have narrowly escaped the stake in England, and to have done so only by a timely recantation ; but his mind had since been nerved. Mild and gentle by nature, he had become firm and vehement by belief ; and had returned to Scotland, anticipating and prepared for the martyr's fate. The name of this man was George Wishart. Long defended by the barons who favoured the Reformation, he was at last seized in the house of Ormiston, by a stratagem of the Cardinal. On the 28th of March, 1546, there was a dense crowd collected in front of the Archiepiscopal castle of St. Andrews, where a stake had been erected. The aspect of that crowd was such as might have foreboded to the Cardinal something besides the death of Wishart. The memory of Patrick Hamilton seemed to overshadow the place ; but the guns of the castle had been pointed to the spot, and Beaton deemed himself secure under their protection. And so, for the time, he was. George Wishart appeared, and the sacrifice proceeded. There was no interruption from popular violence. It had perhaps been well for the persecutor had his precautions been attended with less success. The meekness and constancy of the martyr,

and his prayer for the forgiveness of those who were the instruments of his death, were weapons against which the Cardinal had no defence. There was a muttering more dreadful than the sound of cannon when that multitude dispersed ; and a terrible tragedy ensued. Conspiracies had long existed against the life of the Cardinal, originating in causes wholly separate from religion, and fomented, it is said, by Henry VIII. To the unscrupulous vengeance of his enemies such an opportunity was not to be lost, when they might so well shelter their crime under the frenzied indignation which the murder of Wishart had aroused. On the 29th of May, two months after the martyr's death, the castle of St. Andrews was taken by a handful of men ; and the dagger did the work which might have been righteously performed by the hands of the public executioner.

Safety induced the conspirators to maintain the castle ; which, as Beaton's successor pursued the same course, soon became the common resort of the Reformed. To this stronghold, Knox repaired with others in 1547, and remained until its capitulation in the same year before the combined attack of a French fleet, and the forces of the Regent Arran. The terms of the surrender were violated, and Knox was detained, with others, for nineteen months a prisoner in irons on board the French galleys. Having obtained his liberty in 1549, he repaired to England, then under the rule of Edward. There he was chosen chaplain to the King, and employed in the revisal of the Book of Common Prayer. In 1553, having expressed dissatisfaction with the existing state of the English

Church, he somewhat offended the Council, who, however, at the instance of the King, offered him elevation to the Episcopal Bench. But this could not purchase the consent of Knox to institutions against which he entertained scruples, which, if needless, were at least sincere. In 1554, after the accession of Mary, he fled from England and repaired to Geneva. In the course of the following year he visited Scotland, and remained until the month of July, 1556. During this visit, Knox preached widely over Scotland, under the protection of the more powerful members of the Reformed party: and it was at this period, when, as we have seen, the government of Arran had been overthrown, and Mary of Guise had still need of the influence of the Protestants, that their power and numbers began to be defined.

Knox returned to the Continent in 1556, having infinitely promoted by his visit the progress of the Reformed opinions. His final return to Scotland was in May, 1559. It was at this time, as we have already seen, that the designs of the Queen Regent became declared, and the Protestants were compelled to take decisive measures in self-defence. Knox, of course, immediately joined the "Lords of the Congregation," and became an active and principal agent in that correspondence with the English Queen, which ultimately procured her timely and effectual support. Her aid was, in truth, most needful. The husband of the young Queen of Scots had now ascended the throne of France; the Sovereign of a nation which had become almost entirely Protestant was exclusively under the guidance of the most unprincipled

supporters of the Papacy; and French troops had disembarked on the shores of Scotland to suppress her liberty and religion. Already had the Congregation been worsted on several occasions, and it required all the unsubduable energy of Knox to preserve them from some despondency. We cannot, indeed, believe that a nation struggling for objects of such unspeakable importance, could have been ultimately subdued by all the powers of "leagued oppression." But it is more than probable, that years of misery and bloodshed were saved by the decisive interference of Elizabeth. Early in 1560, the treaty of Berwick, concluded between that Sovereign and the Lords of the Congregation, and the subsequent arrival of the English fleet and army, produced, after some desultory warfare, the great final settlement of June in the same year. In stipulating the immediate withdrawal of the foreign troops on both sides, and the assembly of a free Parliament, this treaty virtually established the Reformed religion.

CHAPTER II.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE REFORMATION; AND
PRINCIPLES LAID DOWN THEREAT.

[1560.] GREAT was the concourse and excitement in the streets of Edinburgh, on the morning of the 1st of August, 1560. It had been stipulated in the treaty between the Commissioners of France and England, that the free Parliament which was to be called was to be held in that month, as giving time for the arrival of a commission from the Sovereign, and that it was to be considered as lawful an assembly of the Estates as if summoned by her own especial writ. But the consequences of such a meeting were not unknown at Paris. The Commissioners, it was asserted, had exceeded their powers. The 1st of August came, but no message or commission from the Queen came with it. The Estates, however, were assembled in such numbers as had not been seen in the memory of man. The Lords Spiritual and Temporal—the high peers and prelates of the realm, barons, great and small, burgesses and ministers—all were there. Much ceremony was used; the insignia of royalty, as was usual in Scotland, were borne into the Assembly Hall, and placed upon the vacant throne. The Estates having previously voted themselves a lawful Parliament in virtue of the treaty,

though wanting the commission of the Crown, some of the bishops retired; but the Archbishop of St. Andrews, with several others, remained. It is hard to say why they did so. When the Reformed ministers presented, as required, an abstract of the doctrines they had taught,—or, as it was called, a “Confession of Faith,” and when the same was read over, article by article, in presence of the whole assembly, the Spiritual Order “spake nothing.” The vote adopting the Confession passed with only a few protesting voices.

I shall not enter into any disquisition on such parts of this Confession as concern purely doctrinal religion. It is enough to say, in the words of the well-known living historian of Scotland, (whose account of those times, with all its general fairness, manifests the strong leanings of a Scottish “Churchman,”) that “it is a clear summary of Christian doctrine, grounded on the Word of God, and approximates indefinitely near, and in many instances, uses the very words of the Apostles’ Creed, and the Articles of the Church of England, as established by Edward VI.”*

The Reformed Faith having been thus affirmatively established, the Parliament proceeded to do so negatively, by passing acts against the authority of the Pope, and even the practice of the Romish religion. There is one fact connected with this last enactment which Presbyterian writers are not always inclined to mention: viz. that the penalties prescribed against the celebration of the Mass, included, in the last instance, the punishment of death. Even the learned

* Tytler.

and judicious biographer of Knox, Dr. Thomas M'Crie, omits the distinct mention of this fact, under the phrase "certain penalties." But this is weakness; we all know that the principles of religious toleration are of much later date than that at which we are now arrived. We know, that the men who took their seats in the Parliament House of Edinburgh, on the 1st of August, 1560, had, many of them, perhaps most of them, seen in their own days the most cruel persecutions not only threatened, but practised, against those who denied Henry VIII.'s supremacy in England; and only a few years before, the most eminent prelates and statesmen of that Reformed Church committing to the stake those whom they considered heretics. It is astonishing, indeed, that the Parliament of Scotland could venture on proscribing so entirely a religion of which their Sovereign was a professed adherent; but perhaps it may be safely said, that they had more excuse than the English Government. They had themselves just escaped from a fiery trial: they had seen some of the holiest and the best among them burned alive, by men, whom, both morally and intellectually, they necessarily despised, and whose hoods and stoles did not prevent their appearing, to the Reformed, rather ministers of Satan's synagogue, than of that holy Church, which is the "pillar and ground of the Truth." Finally, their minds were filled with horror of the Mass as direct idolatry, and applied to their own times and circumstances the ancient denunciations of the prophets of Israel against those who suffered the "land to be defiled." It is to be

observed, too, that the penalty was never enforced. I am not aware of any instance in which a single individual suffered death in Scotland for the sake of his opinions. But, as regards the spirit of intolerance, the historian may smile at the mutual recriminations of rival Churchmen.

The only other transaction bearing on the subject of this sketch, which stands in immediate connection with the meeting of the Estates, is the formation of a scheme of ecclesiastical polity. This was drawn up by the Reformed ministers and others, and presented for confirmation to that species of second Parliament which went in Scotland under the name of the Great Council. Though accepted and signed by many of the nobility and barons, including some of the most powerful names in Scotland, it did not receive any legal sanction, having been bitterly opposed by many. To the principles of this polity, and the causes of the opposition to it, I shall immediately return.

With these transactions we have entered the first of those periods into which I have divided the Ecclesiastical History of Scotland since the Reformation; and already are seen appearing almost all the tendencies which form the key to the course of subsequent events. The facts ecclesiastical, and the facts political, are seen assuming the form which, under certain modifications and temporary changes, will be found substantially characterising them throughout the history. The contest which thus began in 1560, between her Reformed subjects and Mary Queen of Scots, is essentially the same as that which terminated in 1688, in the expulsion of

her great-grandson from the throne of Britain. The same cause which operated in the time of Mary Stewart continued to operate so long as the Stewarts reigned — an irreconcilable hostility between the rights of the governed and the principles of the governor. But it may safely be maintained that the conduct of Mary is infinitely more defensible than the conduct of her children. The whole width between a bigoted Popery and a hardly less bigoted Protestantism, lay between her and a wise and just dealing with her subjects. She had been brought up at the feet of Gamaliel. After the straitest sect of her religion she had been formed a Papist. She had had no time to have her mind familiarised with the idea of rights, in reference to religious belief, apart from the authority of Rome, or from her own opinion of the truth of such belief. In the latter respect, indeed, her subjects, more enlightened as they were on many points, had almost as little just notion as herself. We cannot say all this for her successors. In the first place, the difference between their opinions and those with which they dealt so recklessly in their people, was infinitely less. Rights had sprung up since the days of Mary with which they had had time to become familiar. Yet their course was such as produced—and justly produced—even more hostility of feeling than existed in the Lords of the Congregation against their Papist Queen.

It has been said that the Book of Polity did not receive legislative sanction. The disposition evinced by a large portion of the nobility to oppose the plan of ecclesiastical polity which was proposed by the

Reformed ministers and people, (and which was immediately put into operation, so far as it was practicable, without legislative support,) had most important consequences. All parties are universally agreed on the motives which induced this opposition. The rich benefices of the fallen priesthood had been seized by those who possessed the power. The plans of the Book of Polity ranged over the wide extent of the whole duty of a Christian commonwealth, as it was present to the mind of the Reformers. On principles of singular enlightenment, and in language of vehement conviction, it demanded that the property of the ancient Church should not again be absorbed by individuals, as it had been before by the corruption of the priests of Rome, but given for the permanent benefit of all, to the promotion of three great objects;—to the support of a widely-spread, but moderately rewarded, clergy; to the establishment of an extensive system of national education; and to the maintenance of the poor.* It was in this document that the noble design of the parochial education of Scotland was first conceived;—a design which, carried into effect on a comparatively narrow scale, has conferred such infinite blessings on the country. But it was in vain that such designs were held up to the eyes of avarice; and that John Knox indignantly demanded, in the language of the prophet Haggai, “Whether that was the time to live in their ceiled houses when the House of the Lord was waste?” There were, however, other difficulties: some Church

* See note A.

property had been seized; but the hierarchy were not yet legally dispossessed of their revenues; nor perhaps could the Council venture on so sweeping an appropriation. But the hope of future plunder probably aided the fear of present loss; and to both is to be added the dislike entertained by lawless barons to the strict and over-strained moral and religious discipline which the Book of Polity prescribed. Before our first period has closed, we shall meet with most important results from this formation of a party which, from various motives,—none of them apparently of the purest kind,—were prepared to oppose or alter the system adopted by their brethren; and which the great body of the Reformed never ceased to act on, and to strive for, except in such moments as circumstances compelled them to submit to power.

But we must now turn for a moment to the Book of Polity itself, and endeavour to apprehend the more fundamental principles which were destined to exercise so predominant an influence on the future history of Scotland. What does not directly appear in the Book of Polity and Confession of Faith of 1560, we may gather, without difficulty, from the course pursued by the Reformers in the conduct of practical affairs. The subject is one of commanding interest. There are few, perhaps, now, who can follow the sentiments and regulations of the first Scotch Reformers with entire approval of them all; and to many there must be some at variance with opinions which the combined powers of habit and conviction have rendered almost sacred. By a large class of writers—writers such as we

have found in the "Spottiswoode Society"—their system of polity can be hardly mentioned but in a spirit of controversial bitterness. The single fact that it did not adopt Episcopacy is sufficient to divorce both it and its authors for ever from the toleration of the "Churchman;" and accordingly, in such histories of those times as have been written by men possessed of the genuine "Church" spirit, we see the whole sympathies of the writers taking part with the Romish priesthood, in preference to their opponents. As long as the contest was still undecided,—as long as the concealment of minor differences represents it as one between Protestantism and Popery, so long is there some appreciation of the Reformers. But from the moment when that contest terminates, one absorbing feeling drives them back into the company of the Archbishops of Glasgow and St. Andrews. This is worse than childish. Few unprejudiced minds will fail to see much truth and beauty in the polity of the Scotch Reformers; and when we differ from them, it never should be forgotten who those men were who framed it, and what the circumstances under which it was conceived. It must ever be regarded with peculiar interest, if it were for one consideration only—that it is an ecclesiastical system which professes to be drawn from Scripture—and this by men who had just given forth, in doctrinal religion, a summary of Christianity such as has been above described; by men whose acquaintance with the Bible—whether misguided or not—was the one absorbing interest of their lives; by men who had been in intimate communion with some of the greatest

minds which shone in that remarkable age ; by men, finally, who, for intellectual power, were far above the average of their fellows.

The first great fundamental idea which we observe in the system of the Scotch Reformers, is to be found in their understanding of that much-abused term, **THE CHURCH**. It seems to have appeared to them as if it had been from heresy on this point that all other heresies had sprung ; and of such paramount importance did they deem it that just views should be entertained in regard to this, that we find their explanations of it—not in the Book of Polity, but among the Confessions of their Faith. Under a series of heads—"Of the Church ;" "Of the notes by which the true Church is discerned from the false ;" "Of the authority of the Scriptures ;" "Of General Councils—their power and authority,"—we find a number of affirmative and negative positions—the former stating what *is* to be believed—the latter what *is not*. The latter are, perhaps, the more important of the two. Affirmatively, two meanings are given to The Church ; negatively, several meanings are condemned. First, there is The Church, in the largest sense—denoting that innumerable company out of all nations, and tribes, and ages, who, whether under the Old dispensation or the New, have been chosen of God as his true worshippers in Christ, in spirit and in truth ; to whom belong one Faith, one Lord, one Baptism—the Communion of Saints. Secondly, there is The Church, in the sense of the whole body of professing believers in the truth in each division of the earth—such as was the Church of

Corinth, of Ephesus, or as that then established in Scotland. We have next, what we might expect from men who had before their eyes the incredible corruptions taught and practised by a priesthood who were in full possession of "Apostolical Succession"—the denial of all such positions as place the signs or "notes" of the true Church either in "antiquity, title usurped, lineal descent, place appointed, or multitude of men approving." The true "notes" are again affirmed to be—conformity with the revealed Word in doctrine—a right administration of the Sacraments—and the enforcement of a godly moral discipline. If controversy should arise, touching the interpretation of any passage in the Scriptures, no higher tribunal is allowed than the same Word in other parts. The Spirit of God, it is affirmed, cannot be contradictory to Himself; so that if the interpretation, determination, or sentence of any doctor, church, or council be repugnant to the plain words of God, written in other parts of Scripture, it is most certain *there* is not the true understanding and meaning of the Divine will—"though councils, realms, and nations have approved or received the same."*

It is a strange and instructive passage in the history of the human mind, that the men who laid down such principles as these were the same who conjured the Parliament, by every sacred exhortation, to punish, or, in other words, to persecute the adherents of the Romish faith! What other tribunal did their own maxims leave, for the determination of

* See note B.

true doctrine, than the ultimate authority of *private judgment*? And if neither “realms nor councils” had the right to make *them* believe what was repugnant to their sense of Scripture passages compared, what better right could there be in the Parliament of Scotland to proscribe such as differed, even most widely, from that sense? We must not solve the difficulty which such a course presents, by accusing the Reformers of a want of honesty—of a conscious disregard of principles in reference to others, which they were willing to assert in favour of themselves. They were men who, whatever may have been their errors, were thoroughly, heart and soul, *in earnest*. They believed all they said, and never failed to say all that they believed. There is an explanation, I apprehend, more just to them, and more instructive for us. We see in their example how, in human controversies, the truth advances, as it were, only by small instalments. Principles are enunciated by men who have a single eye to some one or more results, against such prevailing errors as may have roused their special opposition. Ulterior results remain concealed; and the full fruit is only reaped by after-generations.

Nor can we be at any great loss, in general, to account for such inconsistencies as these. For ourselves, indeed, if we accept a principle as true, we must accept all its consequences along with it—all, at least, which we can perceive. But if we would do justice to the course pursued by others, in reference to such principles, especially by those to whom we owe their establishment or revival, we must keep in view the particular occasion—the special

errors—which called them forth. And, in truth, when we look to these, in the case of the Scotch Reformers, we can hardly be surprised that all the consequences of their principles were not fully apparent to themselves. To them the great corruptions of the Romish faith did not appear so much mere false understandings of the Scriptures, as a refusal of Scripture authority altogether. It was against *them* that they raised those great fundamental maxims of the ultimate authority of Scripture as interpreted, and interpreted only, by itself; and of the powerlessness of “realms and councils” to render obligatory on their belief positions which could be proved to be dissonant therewith. When looking at such manifest perversions as the Sacrifice of the Mass—the withholding of one element in the Communion from the laity—the invocation of Saints—and the adoration of the Virgin;—and when farther looking to such enormous and preposterous claims as those of the Papal Court, of the Papal Councils, and of the Papal “Church” (which was the Papal priesthood;)—claims which enabled them, not to guide to a true knowledge of the Scriptures, but, as the Confession of Faith expressed it, to be “masters over the same,”—we cannot wonder it escaped their notice that the same maxims, under which they affirmed their own right to reform their faith, went to the entire condemnation of all physical restraint over religious belief. Yet it is clear that if neither realms nor councils had any right to put their own construction, authoritatively, on the meaning of the Scriptures, there was no tribunal left to stand between those Scriptures and

the individual mind. This consequence was not fully seen, nor is it surprising that it was not. It never occurred to the Reformers that such opinions as those which they proscribed could be considered as drawn, however mistakenly, from Scripture; and experience had not yet taught them, as it has since taught us, that doctrines the most various and contradictory may be entertained by men, who are equally willing to appeal to Scripture, and to compare passage with passage too.

I have yet to state one other fundamental idea proceeded on by the Scotch Reformers, which, though almost entirely lost sight of in practice, under the previous system, and hardly less so by many in the present day, was with them so elementary and essential, that on this, more than on any other, depend all the great peculiarities of their system, and of the ecclesiastical history of Scotland, from that time to the present hour. I allude to the total and entire absence of anything like a priestly elevation of the clergy; and especially to the full association of the laity in all their notions of the powers, duties, and of the very nature of the Church. The minister was, indeed, regarded as an officer of the Christian community indispensable for the due and orderly performance of such public acts as are of perpetual obligation in the services of religion, and for the instruction and exhortation of the faithful; but as possessing no authority over his brethren in doctrine, unless supported by the written Word, nor in rule or discipline except as the representative of the Church. And by this term was denoted, not the clergy, as is the corrupted sense, but the mass of the believing people.

These were no barren speculations. Every institution of the Reformed system bore the impress of their continual presence as fundamental truths. The Christian Church was, indeed, to be divided, like every other community, into ruled and rulers; but of the latter a large, and in many instances the larger proportion, were chosen from the laity. That for which the late Dr. Arnold so earnestly contended, as the first step towards Church Reform—the narrowing of the space which has come to separate the great body of the Church from a class of its officers—the amalgamation of the clergy and the laity in the discharge of common duties, and in the exercise of ruling power—was fully realised by the first Scotch Reformers.

Indeed, the very root—the essential principle—on which the priestly idea of the Christian ministry depends, was wholly wanting in their system. They recognised no invariable rite of institution,—no law, therefore, of perpetual succession, no principle which could constitute the clergy an order or a caste. The minister was merely the expression of an authority which ultimately lay, not in him, but around him, and above him—in the body of the Church. Popular election was the authority on which his position rested; not on the mere naked authority of a plurality of votes given by an uninstructed people, but on the fact of his having received public and formal commission to exercise the office of the ministry, first as a general rule, from his own congregation, and next, in all cases, from the representative authorities of the whole Church. And the special forms under which this commission was conveyed were not suffered to include anything

approaching to a ritual ceremony. The first Reformers rejected ordination.* The miraculous outpouring of the Holy Spirit, which had followed the imposition of Apostles' hands, they believed had ceased, and therefore they judged the form "not necessary."

In the rules laid down, for the admission of ministers, nothing is expressed, or intended to be expressed, but three simple facts: first, that the minister was acceptable to his people; secondly, that his personal qualifications had been examined by the representative authorities of the Church, and had been found sufficient; thirdly, that these solemnly committed him to his people, and his people to him, reminding them both of the sacred obligations under which, in this connection, they severally lay. And after his admission, the minister was not suffered to forget that he was still a responsible servant, not an independent governor of the Church. Elected representatives of his people were placed around him, to help him, indeed, but also to control him. They formed the majority of his parochial court. And as the minister was thus precluded from spiritual despotism, so his people also were precluded from licentious power. The one was reminded that the "Church" of the Reformed was not a priesthood,—

* I need hardly explain that I use the word "ordination" here in its common sense—not as synonymous with "appointment" merely—but as denoting that particular mode of appointment by the imposition of hands, which is supposed to constitute the Christian ministry into a distinct Order—a Priesthood. *Some* mode of appointment must belong to all offices. In this case everything depends on the ideas which are involved in one mode, as distinguished from those involved in another.

the other, that it was not a mob. "The minister when elected," says the First Book of Discipline, "examined, and publicly admitted, may neither leave the flock at his pleasure, to which he hath promised his fidelity and labours, neither may the flock reject or change him at their appetite." Above the ambition, or the passions, or the frivolities of one or both, there rose the representative authority of the Church in its more central courts. It was, thus, a great system of constitutional government, at the heart of which lay, as its pulse of life, the rights and power of the Christian people, as being, in very truth, the Christian "Church."

With these ideas rooted in their mind, the system of the Reformers wanted, I repeat, the essential principle of priesthood. And along with this want there was another want depending on it. The common idea of the distinction between Church and State is founded on a priestly idea of the nature of the "Church." It could not, therefore, find any natural place in the mind of the first Scotch Reformers. Their notions of civil government were not easily separable from their notions of the nature of the Church. Popular representation, at the root of both, left not much room for any superstitious distinction. Accordingly, there are no indications of it in the First Book of Discipline. The true idea of that distinction—that which is not dependent on any priestly notion, and which is, therefore, not the common one—even this appears in a comparatively dormant state.

On this great subject there is a most interesting comparison to be drawn between their views at the period of which I am now especially speaking, and

at a date of only eighteen years afterwards. After this interval of time, a Second Book of Polity appeared, differing in some important points of character from the First. In 1560, when the "Confession of Faith" and "First Book of Polity" were framed, so entirely did they identify the ideas of the Christian Church and Christian Commonwealth, as, in a perfect state, one and the same body, only considered under different relations, that not only was the Parliament and Council addressed, as we have seen, as a fitting tribunal for the discussion of questions both ecclesiastical and purely doctrinal, but we find in the Confession a chapter "on the civil magistrate," which expressly declares it to be the duty of the rulers of the State to be likewise high officers in the Church, "so that not only are they appointed for civil policy, but also for maintenance of the true religion." And to the word "maintenance," is added, in a previous clause, the word "purgation." It is said that to the civil magistrate appertains "most principally" the conservation and purgation of religion.

It is probable, indeed, that Knox and his coadjutors, in framing this sentence, had no other idea before them than that of impressing on the Legislature of Scotland the duty of giving legal sanction to the doctrines, and legal force to the anathemas which they had pronounced to be indisputably founded on the Word of God. But the words "purgation and maintenance" directly imply that an idea of spiritual responsibility, and therefore of spiritual authority, was attached to the civil magistrate. For it is quite obvious that, unless they affirmed the civil magistrate

to be bound to "maintain," as consonant with the Word of God, whatever he is told to be so by some extraneous absolute authority, the sentence does necessarily ascribe to him a right and a duty to exercise his own judgment on the affairs of the Christian Church—and this as regarded "purgation" as well as "maintenance." This sentiment perfectly agrees with the language of Knox, in his "Letters from Geneva," to which I have before referred, in which he says emphatically, "To the civil magistrate specially appertains the *ordering* and reformation of religion." And, accordingly, we find, throughout the first writings and actings of the Scotch Reformers, abundant evidence of their having assumed that such powers did very properly belong to the legislative authorities of a Christian country. The first scheme of ecclesiastical polity which was framed in Scotland was drawn up in compliance with a charge to that effect from the Great Council. It sets forth to that body and "offers to their wisdoms" the judgment of the Reformers on the "common order and uniformity," which ought to be observed, concerning doctrine, administration of the Sacraments, election of ministers, ecclesiastical discipline, and the policy of the Church. It adjured the Council, in the most solemn manner, neither to "admit" anything which God's word did not approve, nor reject anything it enjoined, "for they would not bind the Council to their judgments farther than they were able to prove by God's plain Scriptures." In accordance with this exordium, we find the Reformers, who drew up the First Book of Discipline, submitting to the Council their entire

scheme for the organisation of the Christian Church, on what they conceived to have been its primitive model, including matters of doctrine, of government, and of ritual. It is expressed throughout in the form of an address or petition to the Council, as to an authority not only whose right, but whose duty, it was to concern itself in the minutest regulations of the spiritual economy of the Church. In one passage it even recommends that body to take into its own hands, for a time at least, the appointment of the very highest office-bearers which their system allowed in the ministry of the Reformed.

There are, undoubtedly, many passages which recognise the general and obvious distinction between civil punishments and spiritual censures; and the Church is spoken of as invested by God with power to inflict censures on those sins which are either neglected, or cannot well be reached by the kind of punishments at the command of the civil sword. But even this distinction, simple and rudimentary as it is, and implying little more than a vague recognition of the inaccessibility of spiritual delinquencies to the corporeal inflictions at the command of mere physical power—even this distinction is very imperfectly maintained in other portions of the Book. The civil power is invoked, in the most solemn terms, to attach the severest punishments at its command to various religious practices and beliefs. But the title to judge these to be heretical, would imply the most extensive power of interference in the most purely spiritual concerns.*

* See note C.

It is impossible, indeed, to examine the proceedings of the Reformers in 1560, without seeing, throughout, that the idea of a definite separation between civil and spiritual power had not yet acquired shape or consistence in their minds. The elements of the idea, indeed, existed. That on which alone its truth depends, and which inevitably calls it into being, was in them, and around them. The external circumstances of Christianity in the world, the unreality of most men's religion, the gap between the service of God and that of Mammon, the necessity of keeping Christ's Church as independent as possible of Satan's world, and last, not least, the instinct of defending their own beliefs from all external authority or control,—these things soon taught them that the Church, like every other society having distinctive interests, *must* trust her government to a legislature and executive exclusively her own. But in the summer and autumn of 1560, the first Scotch Reformers were an enthusiastic and hopeful company. They trusted that Christ's law, as their own ardent dispositions had interpreted it, was to be adopted, and engrossed in man's law; and thus that Scotland was to become, under an opened gospel, as one of the "kingdoms of God and of His Christ." But before the first year of the established Reformation had expired, they had already, in some degree, discovered their mistake. The Council would not ratify the Book. The State thus suggested that it was, indeed, separate from the Church. The latter had no resource but to fall back on her instinctive sense of the difference of her province, and of her independence in it; and that public

sanction which the Council refused the General Assembly gave.

The course of eighteen years still farther taught the Reformers, by many a lesson of hard experience, that the time had not yet come when the ideas of 1560 could be realised. Civil rulers, it was found, might not be members, or, if members, might be evil members of the Church. The Second Book of Discipline is, accordingly, in many respects, a very different production from the First. That which is but incidentally mentioned, and not at all pursued in the one, becomes the dominant, pervading idea of the other. The very first line, the heading of the first chapter, introduces us at once to the formidable question, "Wherein the Polity of the Church is different from the Civil Polity." And the question is solved with no faltering accent. The answer is bold, definite, and on the whole, perhaps, as consistent as the subject admits of. And along with recurrence to old and familiar ideas respecting the independence of the Church on civil power, there comes naturally enough, recurrence to old and familiar forms of speech. We hear of the "Power of the Keys," as distinguished from the "Power of the Sword." We hear of the former being a direct commission from Christ Himself to "them unto whom the spiritual government of the Church, by *lawful calling*, is committed;" and we even hear of that power being held by them as the true "successors of the Apostles." Nor can it have been altogether unconnected with this new current of opinion, that the Second Book of Discipline *reverts to the ceremony of ordination.*

Thus we see how eighteen years of jealousy and struggle between the ecclesiastical and civil governments had developed very important principles. It was not that in reading the Bible, and reconstructing the Christian society in conformity with its account, these principles had at once struck the first Reformers. It was not that they had seen them to be enjoined by the Word of God, else they would have been as prominent in the First as in the Second Book. It was that they were enjoined by the facts, the melancholy facts and necessities of the world's condition. It was this, historically speaking, which raised in the minds of the first Reformers the idea of the distinction between "Church" and "State;" and it is this, theoretically speaking, on which alone its truth depends. It is not a distinction as between one class, or order of men, and another—as between priests and laymen. It is merely a distinction between one class of subjects or interests, and another. But it is no Divine command which separates between those who legislate for the one, and those who do so for the other. *This* separation is not of God. The framers of the First Book were not impressed with it from the Bible; but the framers of the Second Book had been deeply impressed with it from the world. The corruptions of a bad civil government,—its estrangement from, and opposition to, the ecclesiastical opinions of its people,—this had taught them the distinction.

Once the idea had forced itself prominently into view from the outward circumstances to which I have alluded, it became necessary to refer it to some

basis of abstract principle ; and as the Bible was the authority to which the Reformers were in the habit of referring on all occasions, they sought that basis *there*. This of course. Convictions coming from one direction, and having reference to one department of truth, are constantly being thus referred to some other direction and some other department, with which, in reality, they have very little, or no direct connection. This is a process by which we may very frequently account for very ponderous deductions hung upon very inadequate texts of Scripture, as well as of other books. So long, however, as general terms are used in expressing such truths as the distinction between civil and spiritual power, it may very safely be referred to a Bible-source, without any very erroneous understanding of the nature of that distinction being involved thereby. And it is observable that this is actually the course pursued in the Second Book of Discipline. There is a general avoidance of specific quotation ; and though decided expressions are frequent as to the “ power of the keys ” being conferred by God, there is nothing to oblige us to a more stringent understanding of the nature of this commission than would naturally be attached to the same language, if applied to the civil power, which also, in a general sense, is derived from God (along with all other rightful authorities whatsoever), and is affirmed to be so in the Second Book itself. But, indeed, the whole question of the distinction between the two powers is put on its rational and true basis, when, in the 4th section of the 1st Chapter, they are described as being distinct “ *in their own nature.*”

And be this observed : the Second Book of Discipline, in maintaining the distinction, maintains along with it those essential principles of the Scottish Reformation, which place it, immoveably, on its true foundation. Whatever may be the tone of certain forms of expression to which I have referred, so long as these principles are preserved there is no room to rest it on any priestly basis. Despite the ceremony of ordination, the ministers of the Second are popular—unpriestly in their character, like the ministers of the First Book. The “Church” still means the mass of the believing people. Their rights and authority still circulate through every corner of her frame. There is no change in the functions to which the laity had been at first so wisely, and on such sound principle, admitted. But the great difference is this ;—there is a careful distinction drawn between the layman acting, by authority from his brethren, as an officer of the Church, and the layman possessed, by independent title, of civil power or influence. *In virtue* of the latter, it is declared that he can have no lawful authority as the former. *Being* an officer of the Church, he ought indeed to use his superior influence in watching over her interests and guarding her purity, like his less powerful brethren ; but *without* that regular commission from the body of the Church, which constituted him a lawful officer of her courts, he had no right to interfere either with the freedom of her deliberations, or with the authority (in her own province) of her decrees. Those who were the civil rulers of a State, ought, indeed, and in a perfect state, would, be also rulers of the Church.

But civil power, as such, had no right to trench upon that jurisdiction which (from the subjects it dealt with—not from the persons who exercised it) was termed spiritual power.

It will be at once seen, from this explanation of the principles of the Scotch Reformers, that when we find—as we do find—in the course of the subsequent history, high claims advanced in reference to the powers of the “*Church*,” and this too, in language not dissimilar from that which had been often used under the Papal system, we must bear in mind the very different construction to be put upon the word, from that which makes such claims so dangerous and so justly feared. In Scotland, “*The Church*” was not *the clergy*. *Spiritual power* was not a superstitious abstraction used for the purposes of an unscrupulous ambition. We may indeed deem the principles we shall find advanced, in respect to the sacredness and independence of spiritual power, exaggerated and impracticable. But we must draw a wide distinction between the claims of an entire Christian community to exercise, in virtue of natural right, independent powers of self-government; and the preposterous pretensions of an usurping Order. We are to remember that by the great institution of the ELDERSHIP, there was no space of separation left between the clergy and the laity. *Elder* was the name assigned to those, to whom I have before referred, who were chosen by and from among the people or congregation to assist their minister, and to exercise with him the powers of discipline. It was the especial duty of the elders, as originally

designed, to pray with the sick,—to keep guard with the pastor over the character of those who were admitted to the Holy Communion, and generally to assist the teaching and exhortation of the minister. These were not less officers or ministers of the Church than the clergyman himself;—as members of the parochial court, they had even jurisdiction over him; *—they formed constituent parts of all the ecclesiastical councils;—and long after the religious duties originally assigned to the office had become generally neglected, it was under this name, and in this character, that all orders of the community were represented in the assemblies of the Church. Thus in Scotland, THE CHURCH became a real power, not a name—not a privileged Order—not a priestly superstition—but a tangible, intelligible thing—a living and active community.

It may enable us to realise more distinctly those principles of the Scottish Reformation which I have now explained, if we attend to the constitution of the General Assemblies of the Church during the first few years of this period. It is apparent, both from the whole tenor of the proceedings and from the names and titles of the members, that the predominant idea entertained of what that

* Chapter X., Section 5, of the First Book of Discipline assigns to the Elders duties almost of entire superintendence over the minister. Ultimately, with concurrence of some neighbouring churches, they might even depose him. Whatever may be thought of such a regulation, it is at least a strong testimony to the extent of power which the laity of the Church were conceived by the Reformers to possess.

Assembly ought to be, was one of complete national representation. The only circumstance which seems to have given them any ecclesiastical character,—as that word is commonly understood—or to have distinguished them from the nature of a Parliament, was the subject matter of their deliberations. And even here no clear distinction was maintained, (as, indeed, with their ideas, none such was possible,) between Church and State affairs. The names and designations of those who composed the first and the third General Assemblies, have been preserved in the records of the Church. In the first they were, in all, forty-one individuals. Of these only six have the title “minister” attached to their names. The remaining number sat under the title of “commissioners”—deputies sent to represent the voices of towns and congregations. This, indeed, the “ministers” were also. The constituency for which each member sat, including the ministers, is specified along with his name. This representative Assembly proceeded, we find, to designate certain individuals as qualified to fill the office of the ministry. In the third General Assembly, accordingly, we find the number of those who bear this title proportionably much greater. Only thirty-five members are named as having composed it, and of these twenty-one bear ecclesiastical designations. There is less specific mention, in this case, than before, of the representative principle; probably on account of the fact that as elected, or at least approved by his congregation, a minister was, *ex-officio*, representative for them.

It is evident, from succeeding regulations, that in

those years the Church was feeling its way to fixed form and order. But such stages in the history of every society are of infinite importance as enabling us to trace what, and how much of later organisations, is due to original ideas of abstract principle, and how much to the force of mere outward circumstances. It is important, therefore, to observe in reference to the regulations referred to, that they all have respect, more or less formally, to the representative principle. In the fourth General Assembly we find that in regard to the composition of an inferior, or provincial court, a definite rule is fixed as to the principle of representation. Those assemblies were to consist of the minister and one lay representative from each "church" or congregation. In the sixth General Assembly we have a still more striking illustration of the broad, national, unrestrictive—I had almost said, secular—principles on which that body was composed. Here we find as members, not only many of the higher nobility—not only the Lords of the Privy Council—but single individuals, none of whom are mentioned as having held any ecclesiastical office, nor as representing any portion of the Christian Church except themselves. They were there, [being, of course, of the number of the Reformed,] in virtue of their respective positions;—as men who held great power,—great influence,—great station. They represented *these*: they expressed the voice of the powers that *were*. And in so doing, as members of that Assembly, they represented a very important part of that which the first Scotch Reformers included in their idea of the "Church"—which was the Christian

community in its body, and in all its members. But this was one of the points on which the expanded idea of the Reformers had need of being clipped, and made square with *facts*. This was one of the points on which the Second Book of Discipline showed more experience of the world, not, however, more just appreciation of the truth, than the First. I need not repeat the nature of the change which eighteen years' experience produced. The members of Assembly were still representatives,—but they were required to represent something beyond themselves, beyond power, influence, or station—some actual section or constituency of the Church.

There are yet a few important points to notice in explanation of the actual organisation or machinery of the system which was founded on the principles now explained. When fully developed it included four principal tribunals. First, the Parochial Court, consisting of the ministers and elders; secondly, a court in which several such parochial courts, included in a certain district, were represented, and which was called a Presbytery; thirdly, a Provincial Assembly, called Synod, which represented a proportionably larger division of the Church; and lastly, the great Council of the whole national Church, which was called the General Assembly. I need hardly say that in 1560 there were not materials for this regular series of tribunals, but from the beginning there were the first, and the last, which may be considered as primary and essential. During the first few years after the establishment of the Reformation we meet with much variety of detail;

and there is one arrangement of that period which has called forth much attention and some controversy. This was the appointment of men, under the name of Superintendents, who were commissioned to plant ministers in vacant places, and to oversee the building up of the Church generally within a certain district committed to their charge. This, it has been alleged, is inconsistent with the idea of Presbyterian parity among ministers, and indicates that the first Scotch Reformers had no real objection to an Episcopal system. Now I think it quite certain,—and it has been well shown in the controversial work of Bishop Sage,—that the first Scotch Reformers did not entertain those feelings towards Episcopacy in the abstract, which we shall presently see were very soon induced by the violence and injustice of its Scotch adherents. But they indisputably held, as their own idea of a strictly scriptural system of Church government, that there was no permanent office in the Christian Church superior to that of the minister of a particular people or congregation, or parish; and to *him* they applied, as they found the New Testament doing, the Greek word ἐπίσκοπος. Such other offices as they considered also of permanent authority in the organisation of the Church were regarded rather as supplementary than inferior to this—such were elders, deacons, doctors. The institution of Superintendents, as recommended by them, so far from being inconsistent with, is a confirmation of, such having been their views; for the Book of Discipline, in making the suggestion, uses these words—“We have thought it good to signify to your

honours (the Council) such reasons as moved us to make difference between preachers AT THIS TIME." The reasons given are such as may suggest themselves without difficulty, when we remember the circumstances of the time. There were few labourers in the harvest, and the field was wide. If they had assigned to every Reformed minister a particular flock, large districts of the country would have been left altogether unprovided with instruction, and therefore it seemed good to give to some a roving commission to direct the erection of the Reformed Church over a larger allotted district. But the most cautious regulations were made against Superintendents being converted into Prelates. They were to be subject, like any other minister, to the Assemblies of the Church; and as it was *from* these that they received their mission, so *by* these also it might be rightfully withdrawn. Nothing can be more certain than that the Scotch Reformers had a decided objection to what is generally understood by the word Episcopacy; not, however, a bigoted objection, or one accompanied by feelings of bitter animosity, such as we shall find hereafter; neither, perhaps, such objections as might not have been overcome by some modifications in Episcopal power as they were accustomed to regard it; but still a firm belief that it was a *growth* upon the original system as indicated in Scripture narrative. On the truth or wisdom of their principles and conduct in this respect I venture no opinion; I state the fact, and the fact only, leaving the determination of more knotty points to the judgment or prejudice of the reader.

CHAPTER III.

HISTORICAL SKETCH, EMBRACING THE TWO FIRST
PERIODS 1560—84—92.

[1560—84.] THE next prominent epoch in the ecclesiastical history of Scotland since the Reformation is 1584. During these twenty-four years time wrought many and great changes. In 1560, Mary Stewart was the young and beautiful Queen of Scotland and of France—her character yet unsullied—and in every respect her condition such as gave but little presage of her subsequent misfortunes. In 1584, she was the helpless captive of a jealous and deceitful rival; and was about to become the victim of perhaps one of the greatest and meanest crimes which history records. In 1560, she had not seen, since childhood, the country of which she wore the hereditary crown. In 1584, it had become to her the scene of a life which we follow with alternate feelings of reprobation and of pity. In 1560, the supreme power in Scotland was in the hands of a Parliament rebellious against her authority and her religion; in 1584, it was in the peaceful possession of a son—the fruit of a subsequent union—who was dictating to obsequious Estates principles which were to be the fatal heritage of his house. In 1560,

John Knox was reaping the first fruits of his ardent labours, and was the principal figure in a triumphant Reformation; in 1584 those labours had long since closed; that extraordinary man was resting—at last—in the churchyard of St. Giles in Edinburgh, and had devolved upon another, hardly less able or less intrepid than himself, the defence of the system he had raised.

He lived to see those seeds of discord sown in the Church of his own country, which, for more than a hundred years, were destined to produce the most calamitous disorders; nor were there wanting other circumstances to render troubled the last days of his long life of contest. His later years had been much spent in warning his Church and country against the designs of the Papal party from abroad, and no communication between Mary and the Courts of the Catholic Powers had escaped his watchful eye. By many his fears were derided as visionary, and, as regards Scotland, it is clear they were much exaggerated. His vehement language against the character of the Romish faith, and deep-seated horror of the designs of which he believed its adherents capable, were, even in that day, deemed uncharitable. But he lived to see the confirmation of worse than his worst opinions—the fulfilment of worse than his worst suspicions. A short time before his death he heard with a horror common to Europe, but perhaps with less astonishment, that many thousand Protestants, men, women, and children, had been butchered in one week in the streets of Paris, and of the other towns of France, and that the Papal Court had issued

its thanksgivings, and instituted a commemoration of the bloody sacrifice.*

The sudden death of Francis II. in the end of 1560 was an event which had happened with providential opportuneness for the safety of the Reformed in Scotland. He and Mary had steadily refused to ratify the treaty of Edinburgh; and active measures had been commenced under the direction of Mary's uncles for the re-assertion of her authority, and the re-establishment of her faith. But that event dissolved the more immediate connection of France with the affairs of Scotland, and left the Guises sufficient occupation, for a time, at home. The Queen, on her arrival in her own dominions, was received with an enthusiasm which strangely contrasts with both previous and subsequent events. The mingled emotions of gallantry towards a beautiful woman, and of loyalty to a youthful Queen, seemed for a moment to supplant the more deeply-seated springs of action. Even the intolerance of dogmatism was hushed until roused by the first royal celebration of the Mass. But for nearly four years it was Mary's policy to submit to every restraint, and even much indignity upon her religion, for the attainment of one great end, which, when gained, would have enabled her to make up in full her obligations to her Church;—this was the securing of her succession to the English crown. That this was pursued by her in entire subordination to the ultimate designs of the Catholic party, would, indeed, be to ascribe to her too much of the enthusiasm of

* The medal commemorative of the "Strages Hugonotorum" is still to be obtained at the Vatican.

the mere religionist ;—too little of the vanity and ambition of the woman and the Queen. But her perfect toleration of heresy during this period, and the direct support which she even gave it, was guardedly limited to an extent which should leave her free to alter her course when time and opportunity arrived. This toleration rested on her Royal Proclamation only ; no inducement could persuade her to suffer any Parliamentary enactments confirmatory of those which she had refused to sanction ; and the Protestant nobility who formed her ministry were either too much satisfied with the temporary power which they enjoyed, or too confident in the sincerity of her purpose, to take any active measures towards the attainment of an end so indispensable for the full security of the Reformed Church. In vain did Knox and his associates denounce the selfishness or negligence of their conduct. The fears and suspicions he entertained were deemed violent and uncalled-for by the actual conduct of the Queen ; who, however, whilst issuing proclamations in favour of the Protestant religion, was at the same time assuring the Papal Court that nothing could induce her to forget its cause. The motives of ambition, however, were, it is probable, more constantly present at that time to Mary's mind than those of religion, and we almost forget the evidences of deceit on her part in the more accomplished and successful duplicity of the English Princess.

The final announcement of Elizabeth, after much long and hollow negotiation, that she would suffer no acknowledgment of Mary's succession, was imme-

diately followed by that course of conduct in the Scottish Queen, which led to such tragical events. We follow with horror and disgust the complicated and criminal intrigues of ambition, of love, and of revenge; and amidst a continued series of the most heinous crimes, we are led almost to doubt the existence of one leading man in Scotland who was free from more or less participation in the guilt of their commission. The Queen's marriage with Lord Darnley—her signing the great Catholic League, for the destruction of Protestants all over Europe—the rise of David Rizzio, and his incurring the jealousy of the King and of the nobles—their horrid assassination of him in the presence of Mary—her consequent estrangement from her husband—his murder,—the immediate union of his murderer and his widow—such are the scenes which follow each other in rapid and bewildering succession. Others not less tragical ensue. In the short space of a single month after her disgraceful union with the Earl of Bothwell, Mary was a captive in the hands of her subjects; and the roar of an indignant nation sounded round the island walls of Lochleven Castle, demanding, on principles of unprecedented boldness, the open arraignment of its Sovereign on a charge of murder. Compelled to resign her authority in favour of her infant son, and subsequently too glad for safety to acquiesce in the appointment of her brother, the Earl of Murray, to the Regency, she next appears at the head of an assembled army, staking and losing her last resource at the battle of Langside. All these events, from her marriage with Lord



Darnley, to the defeat by Murray at Langside, happened within the short space of three years; the former having taken place in July, 1565, the latter in May, 1568.

The ten following years of the civil history of Scotland are, if possible, even still more calamitous and disturbed. They are occupied by the four successive Regencies of the Earls of Murray, Lennox, Mar, and Morton; and for five years of this period, we find the country a prey to a furious civil war, between the partisans of the captive Queen, and those of the established Government; and for the remaining five, grievously disturbed by the complicated intrigues of avarice, of ambition, and of religious enmity. Of the four Regents above named, the first two were both cut off by violence, and the last was compelled to demit his authority—nominally to his young Sovereign—but really, of course, to such as desired for themselves, the power he held. This assumption of the reins of government by James VI. took place in 1578, he not having then completed his twelfth year. From this date to that of the second ecclesiastical epoch, 1584,—other six years yet remain. During these, it may be truly said that the kingdom was hardly less under Regencies than before. We find three individuals successively possessed of commanding influence over the young King:—First, Morton himself, who, by a counter-revolution, had almost immediately regained the place of which he had resigned the name;—secondly, Esmé Stewart, a nephew of the late Regent Lennox, and consequently a cousin of the King, who was successively

created Earl and Duke of Lennox;—and thirdly, Captain James Stewart, on whom was conferred the Earldom of Arran, vacant by the proscription and forfeiture incurred by the whole house of Hamilton, under the Regency of Morton, for adherence to the interests of Mary.

Such is the distracted history of the first four-and-twenty years after the establishment of the Reformation in Scotland. But distracted as it is, we can still trace, amid all the immense variety of individual motive, one great leading principle of action, which explains the general current of events. The cause of Mary, supported by all the influence of the great Catholic Continental Powers, specially of France, and of the adherents of the ancient faith in Scotland, was considered and opposed as the cause of Popery; whilst that of the various Regents, supported by the policy, and sometimes by the arms of the English Queen, was not less constantly considered as the cause of the Reformed. “In Scotland,” says Bishop Jewel, in a letter to Bullinger, dated 1570, “there are at this time two parties; one of which cherish the pure religion and the gospel, and depend on us: the other are enemies to godliness and friendly to Popery, and are inclined towards the French.” This aspect of affairs does not, of course, so clearly appear until the period when despair of succeeding in her efforts respecting the English succession, induced Mary to change her policy; but it was immediately subsequent to her union with Darnley that she formally put her hand to the engagements of the League. We find accordingly the whole influence

of the Reformed Church* engaging on the side of the Earl of Murray, when he became the head of the confederacy which took arms against the reckless and disgraceful courses of the Queen. This most remarkable man had been sent, in 1560, to invite his sister to her own dominions; and had then, and since, been repeatedly tempted by the highest offers of the Papal interest. But his ambition—great as it seems certainly to have been—was at least limited to objects more coincident with his duty to his country, and to the Church, of which he had professed himself an early convert. He had been the chief and affectionate adviser of Mary in her negotiations with Elizabeth; and whatever may have been the influence of some selfish motives in determining his subsequent course towards her, it is certain that, in the main, it was such as was absolutely demanded, for the safety of the Reformed Church. It was under his Regency that constitutional completion was first given to the enactments of 1560; and it was a day of grief, and of real misfortune to his country, when Murray fell in the streets of Linlithgow, under the hand of the assassin Bothwellhaugh.

But this same period of four-and-twenty years is more important, as that in which the seeds were sown of a new and more lasting contest between the people and the prince. It was not the will of Providence that the efforts of the Catholic League against the Protestantism of Britain should ever meet with any measure of success; *that* storm blew over with the

* I speak here in a general sense. There were Protestants among the adherents of Mary.

gale which dispersed the Great Armament of Spain. Neither the intrigues of Mary's continental friends, nor those of her home adherents—neither the exertions of the Guises, nor the crime of Bothwellhaugh—were destined permanently to affect the future history of Scotland. But at the very time that the danger from Catholicism was being overcome, and the cause of Mary had been rendered desperate, the avarice of the Scottish nobility originated a strife, the ultimate effects of which could hardly have been foretold, but which—as has been truly said by Wordsworth—

“—ring through Scotland to this hour.”

It was on the night of the 2nd of April, 1571, during the Regency of the Earl of Lennox, that a handful of men carried by surprise the important stronghold of Dumbarton Castle, then one of the last which was still in the possession of Mary's friends. Among the prisoners taken on that occasion, was Hamilton, Archbishop of St. Andrews. Thirteen years had now elapsed since, under the jurisdiction of this prelate, the last martyr of the Scottish Reformation—the aged Milne—had been brought to the stake, where so many others had suffered the same fate before him. The intervening time Hamilton had spent in the various schemes of a reckless and unprincipled ambition. He had been implicated in the murder both of the King and of the Regent; and, along with other members of the house of Hamilton, had received in triumph the fugitive assassin of the latter. For these crimes the Archbishop was brought to an immediate and somewhat hasty trial, condemned,

and executed. From his death, and from that of some other incumbents of the ancient benefices of the Romish Church, which happened about the same time, most important consequences arose. The Popish hierarchy had never been legally dispossessed of the emolument of their sees, and, with the exception of a small portion which had been assigned for the maintenance of the Reformed clergy, they had been suffered to continue in the enjoyment of the property of the Church. The Scottish nobles had long cast a wistful eye on so valuable a prize; and now, when death and forfeiture had made some important vacancies among the Romish priesthood—now was the time to secure the acquisition of those revenues. But none could legally hold ecclesiastical property but such as were themselves ecclesiastics. A Parliamentary secularisation, or seizure, was too bold a measure, opposed as it would be by the whole influence of the Reformed ministers, who loudly denounced the selfish avarice which prevented the application of the property of the Romish Church to the much-needed objects designated by the Book of Discipline.

How then was the desired appropriation to be effected? A most notable scheme was planned. There were already Superintendents in the Reformed Church, and why might there not be Bishops too? Every possible concession might be made to the Presbyterian character of the existing constitution of the Church—there need be little change but a change of name—it was not necessary that the new Bishops should be possessed of any spiritual power,

or any authority in the government of the Church, superior to that already delegated to Superintendents as representatives of corporate authority; they might be examined and admitted according to the same forms; they might be subject, like them, to the jurisdiction of the Ecclesiastical Court—to the control, to the censure, and finally, to the deposition of the General Assembly. All these concessions the Regent and the nobles were willing to make, and did make. What then, it may be asked, was the object of a change at all? It could not be a desire to maintain the “Catholicity” of “the Church”—it could not be a desire to secure the blessings of Apostolic Episcopal Succession. There was no provision for this—no thought of it; it was an idea of which the Earls of Lennox, Mar, and Morton had not the remotest conception. One object, and one object only, had those men in view; one requirement, and one requirement only, was made of the presentee to a vacant bishopric—that he should not be too greedy of its revenues—that in consideration of a certain part he should pass on the greater portion into the exchequer of his patron.

Such was the system on which the Regent and higher nobility had already begun to act, before any public sanction except their own had as yet been given to it. Bishop Keith, in his Catalogue of Scottish “Bishops,” gives a quaintly honest account of this transaction, and of the first origin of his Order in the Reformed Church of Scotland. “After the death of Bishop Hamilton, the rents of the see (St. Andrews) were by the Regent conferred upon the

Earl of Morton; and this nobleman being desirous to enjoy those rents *in some sort of legal manner*, made choice, &c." Accordingly, in the Parliament of August, 1571, the person who had thus honourably acquired the title of Archbishop of St. Andrews was admitted, under protest from the Reformed Church, to his seat as a member of the Spiritual Estate.

From this date we may trace the rapid progress of the elements of the strife which was to come; and in the beginning of the ensuing year we meet with the contending parties fairly engaged on the same field, employing substantially the same tactics which continued to mark the contest until it assumed its more disastrous form under Charles I. To understand its progress we must specially attend to the notions which were yet common to both parties; and in particular to the position occupied by the great ecclesiastical Assemblies of the Reformed Church. Their power was enormous. I have already explained their remarkable organisation—one which may be truly said to have constituted them more really the representative of the national will, than the Parliament itself. The idea had been growing rapidly, and had already taken firmest root, that without their approval there could be no rightful interference in the government or condition of the Church. They had risen to this commanding eminence, not from the force of any Act of Parliament, but from the deeper sources of their own nature—from the power of *facts*—from the irresistible influence of natural and acknowledged right. There are perhaps few

instances in the whole history of human institutions, of so great a power having arisen so suddenly, so naturally, almost so unperceived. The very first Parliament held under the Regency of Murray, to which I have already alluded, refers to those Assemblies as of pre-existing and independent authority in the government of the Church; and this was at a date only seven years subsequent to the first triumph of the Reformed religion.

Such being the position held by those Assemblies, —a position which they had acquired from the broad and popular base on which they rested,—it became a felt necessity on the part of those who were desirous of innovating on the established forms of the Church, to gain their assent, or, if this was unattainable, to overcome their opposition by stratagem or by violence. The expedient adopted by the Earl of Mar in 1572 is the same which was afterwards frequently adopted by James himself. It consisted in holding extraordinary conventions of ministers and others, at which all the various means at the disposal of a government were brought to bear upon the members. The reluctant concessions which were thus obtained were then used as the consent of the Church. It was the necessary consequence of this mode of procedure, that when the *bonâ fide* General Assemblies of the Church, which met once, or oftener, every year, began to exercise their authority in opposition to such endeavours, a temptation was held out to the Government to make attempts upon the freedom of their deliberations—when management became impossible, to call in question the legality of their power; and

finally, (this was the last and fatal resort,) by the strong hand of arbitrary power to venture on their violent suppression.

The frequency, and sometimes the facility, with which Assemblies of the Church were made the instruments of injury to the cause in which it was henceforth engaged, in opposition to the Government, calls attention to a remarkable distinction between those days and our own, in reference to a very important matter. In our times, when a Church, or a party in a Church, either becomes dissatisfied with its existing constitution, or is offended by changes introduced from within or from without, the ready,—the *too* ready and immediate resource is separation,—the institution of a new religious society or sect. It was not so in the days—nor until long after the days—of which I have now been speaking. Uniformity of religious discipline and worship was then deemed by all parties an essential requisite; and the consequence necessarily was, that every contest in the Church became a contest as between supremacy on the one hand, or suppression on the other. The Church of any one nation or community was regarded as necessarily one and undivided; the resource so commonly, and often so lightly, adopted now, by which men resign the contest without waiving their opinions or altering their practice in ecclesiastical concerns, was never dreamed of then. The Church of Scotland was the Church of all Scotchmen; and, whether Presbyterian or Episcopal in its government, it must needs be acknowledged, and was acknowledged, as such by all the Protestants of the realm. This same fact, it will be

at once perceived, explains both the obstinacy of the contest and the occasional concessions with which this character was still compatible. Neither party ever lost sight of its ultimate design ; but both had frequent occasion, either partially or temporarily, to succumb. When complete ascendancy was unattainable, there was no alternative but compromise.

Such is the nature of the contest which begins with the introduction by the Regents, about 1571-2, of a species of nominal and corrupt Episcopacy, and which thenceforward occupies the whole history of the Scottish Church down to the period of the Revolution. It becomes fully developed in all its features before the close of the first twelve years ending in 1584. The corruptions and abuses to which so anomalous a system inevitably led, roused the immediate opposition of the Church. The titular dignitaries were perpetually incurring the censure of the Assemblies for faults or for deficiencies, such as we might expect from men who could accept so contemptible a position. The Regent had recourse to the expedient of an extraordinary Convention, and so far succeeded as to obtain the consent of those who were there assembled, to the existence of the titular dignities as a temporary arrangement conceded to the circumstances of the time, upon conditions, however, such as have been already mentioned,—conditions which, except in civil privileges, and a delegated power, left the Bishop still a Presbyterian, and subjected him to the indignity—an indignity which no true “ Church man ” could have borne—of being placed under the authority of Assemblies which were not even entirely

clerical. When this extraordinary and absurd compromise was made, John Knox was still alive. He had already sounded at an early period his note of warning and alarm. To the General Assembly of 1571 he addressed a letter, denouncing participation or compliance in the guilt of simony. "The battle," he told them, "would be hard ;" but it was their duty to withstand to the last the "merciless devourers of the patrimony of the Church," whatever might be their estate or power. The battle did indeed prove a hard one ; and the Church, and even John Knox, were compelled by the circumstances of the time to limit their endeavours to protestations against the permanence of the system, and opposing the grosser abuses which eventually arose, such as the introduction of minors, laymen, and unqualified persons into the benefices and sees, and in general to the violation of the conditions under which the assent of the Convention had been given. But things could not long remain in this state ; nor could even the death of Knox, which happened towards the close of 1572, check the rapid progress of bolder resolutions. It was the fate of Episcopacy at this time in Scotland to be linked with circumstances of such manifest avarice and deceit, as accumulated against it just feelings of indignation and contempt. During the two years following the death of Knox, each day was ripening the more determined opposition of the Church. The breach between the clergy with the great body of the people, and the Government or higher nobility, was widening rapidly ; and the latter fearing the power, and seeing the tendency of the General Assembly,

began to withdraw themselves from its meetings, with a view to decreasing its authority.

It was in reference to this course that a most remarkable letter was addressed by the Assembly of March, 1574, to the Regent Morton, which strikingly illustrates that great peculiarity in the ecclesiastical institutions of Scotland, on which we cannot dwell too much—the liberal and unpriestly ideas entertained of the nature of the Christian “Church.” In this letter a solemn protest is entered against the notion that laymen may safely resign the duties which devolve upon them as members of the Church, or that the powers of government therein are confined to those only who are “appointed to the ministry.” “It is known to your Grace,” proceeds the letter, “that since God blessed this country with the light of the Gospel, the whole Church appointed, and Parliament authorised, that two Godly Assemblies of the whole general Church of this realm should be held each year, as well of ALL members thereof,—IN ALL ESTATES,—as of the ministers; the which Assemblies have been, since the first ordinance, continually kept in such manner that the most noble thereof, the Highest Estate, have joined in their own persons the Assembly as members of one body, concurring, voting, authorising all things there along with the brethren.” And at that moment—the letter goes on to say—was the Church assembled, soliciting the counsel and the presence of the Higher Orders of the State; so that (such is the general intimation this document seems intended to convey) it was their own fault if they did not take their accustomed place, and defend their own

system where they had a right to do so ; but their voluntary absence would not prevent the competent tribunals from pursuing their own independent course on matters rightfully subject to their jurisdiction.

Such was the state of men's minds in Scotland, when in July, 1574, one, who ten years before had left Scotland, as a youth desirous of completing his education, returned to his native country, a learned, and already a celebrated man. The Scottish Presbyterian clergy of the present day are not generally men remarkable for extensive learning, still less for extensive knowledge of the world. It was different in the times of which I am now speaking. The intense excitement occasioned by the circulation of new ideas,—the desire of knowledge—and the paramount interest of religious movement, produced at that time the closest intercourse between the most distant parts of Europe. The communion of mind with mind was quick and powerful, more than we can well conceive, for whom the improvements of physical science have not done more than was effected by those strong incitements. The young man who had left the University of St. Andrews in 1564, from a craving after knowledge which the courses of that Institution were insufficient to satisfy, had since been in familiar intercourse with many of the most powerful intellects of the time, and had, besides, become acquainted with the world and human character in the most varied and instructive forms. For two years he had studied at the University of Paris, then much frequented by students from all parts of Europe, and having

Professors among whom the Reformed religion had made considerable progress. There he had abundant opportunity of observing the progress of the great Catholic reaction, and the rapid advances of the Order of Jesus. In 1566, he had repaired to the University of Poitiers, in which the fame of his acquirements immediately procured for him a high official place, which he continued for three years to occupy. But by this time the League had begun its more active operations, and the Catholics and Reformed of France were disputing their opinions on the field. The siege of Poitiers, by Admiral Coligni, and the danger he incurred from his own opinions, induced him to take refuge in Geneva; and there he had lived in constant intercourse with all the learned and celebrated men who taught in or frequented that extraordinary Republic.

The society to be met with at Geneva was at that time, and had been for many years before, one of no common interest. From the first moment that persecution had begun its work, that city, with some other towns of Switzerland, had been the refuge of the proscribed of Europe. Her streets and shores were thronged by men who had been chief actors in some of the most remarkable scenes of the world's history. There were there those who, in the heart of Italy and Spain, had been reached by the light which the Inquisition so fatally—so diabolically—quenched;—men who, in reference to their own countries, were as “the gleanings of grapes when the vintage is done,” and with whose exile the sceptre departed from the one, and the revival of national life was postponed

(how long ?) amongst the other, people. There were there those who in the Convent of San Isidro, under the walls of Seville, had heard and accepted the great doctrines of the Reformed, and from the leaven of whose new convictions there had been promise that even the monks of Spain would be blessings to their country. There were there those who, from almost every academy and city of Italy, had gathered round Renée, Duchess of Ferrara, and had enjoyed among themselves, and in her society, the converse of awakened mind. Nor were there wanting others, the interest of whose character was not dependent only on their new beliefs. There were there—the honoured guests or cherished teachers of that City-State—some of the greatest intellects of the time, in all the various departments of science and philosophy. It was a great focus of the mental world, to which every month, every week, almost every day, was bringing some new visit from some distinguished name. There was therefore large experience to be gathered from that narrow spot. The history of almost each individual there was connected, more or less, with the deepest interests of the day; each had his own narrative to give of when, and how, he had been awakened to the sense of truths, which the tramp of ages had been treading deeper and deeper under foot; whilst not a few could also add to graver matters, the stirring incidents of personal adventure—could tell how narrowly they had escaped the horrid deaths to which their friends or relatives had fallen victims—the fires of Seville or the canals of Venice.

Such was the society (and most powerful was its

influence, not on him only, but through him upon his countrymen) of which our young Scotchman had now become a member. And in this society he soon took a distinguished place. He became the intimate friend of Beza, and the sphere of his acquaintance was still farther widened by the dreadful events of St. Bartholomew's Eve. Through the Passes of the Jura, and up the Valley of the Rhone, the fugitives came flocking into the City of the Reformed, secure of shelter and encouragement by the blue waters of the Lemman Lake. In this crowded intellectual company thought was as free as the winds which flew over them from the glaciers of Mount Blanc; and the horrid scenes, from which many had just escaped, increased the eagerness with which they sought out, and discussed, the principles of mental freedom, and of civil liberty.* Bold, earnest, and acute, the young Scotchman had deeply imbibed the sentiments which circulated there, and employed all the vigour of his mind and the elegance of his scholarship to express them, both in prose and verse. His principles and

* I have been represented as asserting here that the principle of religious toleration, in its fullest extent, was distinctly acknowledged at Geneva; and the thrice-famous burning of Servetus has been quoted to confute the statement. It is one, however, which I never meant to convey. I shall not dwell on the fact that the burning of Servetus took place during the life of Calvin, some twenty years before the period of which I speak; because I have little doubt that there were certain tenets, such as a denial of our Lord's divinity, which all the Reformers of that day would have proscribed and punished more or less severely. I have repeatedly referred to this throughout the Essay. The passage in the text must, of course, be taken relatively, not absolutely.

his character are, in this point of view, sufficiently indicated in a short Latin Epigram on the state of France at that time :—

Ad libertatem quid *obest* tibi, Gallia? Vis, fraus,
Et Lupus et lupa cum sanguineis catulis.
Ad libertatem quid *adest* tibi, Gallia? Jus, fas,
Mensque manusque virûm. Nunc quid abest? **ANIMUS.**

Such was the man, such the powers and disposition of his mind, who returned to his native country at the critical time above described, and was destined to exercise the most commanding influence on its future history. The Presbyterian Church was fully compensated for the loss of John Knox in the arrival of ANDREW MELVILLE.

All things were now ready for the commencement of a great movement in the Church; a leader only was required whose abilities and influence might give expression to its pre-existing feelings. For this, both the virtues and the faults of Andrew Melville eminently fitted him. On his arrival in Scotland, the Regent Morton and the academical establishments of his country competed for the honour and advantage of securing him in an office connected with themselves. He was soon after elected and installed Principal of the University of Glasgow—a position which placed him in official connection with the Church. His labours in reforming the state of academical education in Scotland, arduous and important as they were, could not prevent his active mind from taking a lively interest in public affairs, which were at that time so thoroughly inwoven with the condition

of the Church. I need hardly explain what part he took. He considered the recent introduction of a corrupt species of Prelacy (it cannot be termed Episcopacy) as only the first step towards an unacknowledged end,—a handle by which the Court and the nobles intended gradually to restrain the free deliberations of the Church, and finally to overthrow the jurisdiction of her Assemblies. This was perhaps a more jealous view than was warranted at the time. The motley system which had been established was such as soon produced intolerable confusion ; and in the very year that Melville arrived in Scotland the Parliament had voted that as “sundry inconveniencies had followed, and more were likely to occur hereafter,” from the want of a more “perfect policy how the Church should be governed in decent and comely order,” a committee should be appointed to draw up a more consistent system of government and discipline. To this committee the General Assembly added a committee of its own, of which Melville was named a member. The result was that to which I have already alluded in the earlier part of this Essay—the Second Book of Discipline.

But though the Regent could not deny the disorders which existed in the Church, and professed his willingness to concur in a “more perfect policy,” the same motives which had withheld the sanction of Parliament from the First, withheld it also from the “Second Book.” No active opposition was, however, offered to the course taken by the Church, either in drawing up this scheme of ecclesiastical government, or in the more active measures which were taken at

every new meeting of the General Assembly, for carrying its principles into practical effect. These were begun in the second meeting of that body, for the year 1575, by John Dury, one of the ministers of Edinburgh; who, on the Assembly's first proceeding, as was the usual course, to a review of the conduct of bishops, rose, and protested that his acquiescence in the order of the day should not prejudge what he or any of his brethren might have to urge against the existence of their office, as then understood, in the Church. Andrew Melville seconded the protest; and from this time the Assemblies of every successive year took more and more active steps, until, in 1580, in full Assembly, the Royal Commissioner being present, an unanimous vote was carried, that the name and office was abolished in the Church of Scotland; and such was the power of that great Council, and so fully did it express the public sentiment, that the submission of the whole Order, with the exception of five individuals, was given in before the close of the year.

So far, the contest had been really easy. The Assemblies of the Church had abolished a corrupt and anomalous system, by the free exercise of the same authority which had been made the instrument of its introduction. The civil government, with every disposition to oppose them, had not hitherto felt itself in a position to do so. It was obvious, it might have been thought, that they had formerly either over-rated its power, or under-rated their own. But at the very moment that the contest seems to have ended, we find that new forces had been gathering to recommence and to sustain it. The Regencies

had now ended :—a boy of fourteen had his choice of councillors ;—and a new favourite had begun his reign. In the same Assembly which effected the final clearance, for which its predecessors had prepared the way, the Church first became officially acquainted with a man, who, by professing himself a member, became their more dangerous opponent. This was Esmé Stewart, the king's cousin, who, in the entire possession of his favour, had risen to the highest influence in the State, and was successively created Earl and Duke of Lennox. The same clue to the events of Scottish history, both civil and ecclesiastical, still guides us here. There were now, as there had been before, two great contending interests—the English and the French. The ultimate object of the latter was still, we cannot doubt, what it had ever been—the re-establishment of Mary, and of Mary's faith. But an important change, in the mode of working, had become essential. James was a Protestant, but he had acquired a tendency to oppose the growing sentiments of the great body of his people in reference to the government of the Church. What there was, already in existence, of any tendency to dissension and disturbance among the Reformed, was so much gained. It was the interest of the French party to exert itself in support of any power which was likely to disturb the Church. Lennox was the head of the French interest. He was in constant communication with the House of Guise, and he lent all his influence with the King to urge him into collision with the Presbyterian system.

We cannot be surprised, if, under such a combination of circumstances, the opinion grew and strengthened with the progress of every hour, in Scotland, that Episcopacy was but a step towards the establishment of Popery in Religion, and of despotism in the State. Lennox had indeed professed himself a convert, and addressed a letter to the Assembly, declaring himself an humble member of the Reformed Church, and giving them "ane free and humble offer of due obedience." But the dreadful principles adopted to promote the great Catholic re-action, were now known in Scotland; and the name of an Order calling itself by the name of Him in whom there was no guile, was already becoming proverbial for every species of deceit. Lennox was not believed. The crisis rapidly approached. James determined to re-introduce Episcopacy from love of power, and a pedantic pride in his own ecclesiastical and theological opinions. Lennox, if from nothing else, from motives of avarice, and the French interest, for obvious reasons supported both. But a nation's will is a hard thing to overcome, especially when it finds a voice in a body of able and determined men: A minister was found by Lennox who would accept the Archbishopric of Glasgow, in consideration of a very small part of its emoluments, the rest being handed over to the Earl. But this minister was met by the Assemblies of the Church with the most determined firmness. In spite of the threats of his powerful patrons, and the personal interference of the King, a series of proceedings were there instituted against him; and, such was the power then wielded

by those Assemblies, that Montgomery found it necessary to submit. Prompted, however, again by Lennox, he resumed the gift of the see, and was again met with equal firmness. But the court had now recourse to the usual weapons of arbitrary power—and for two years we follow the contest through scenes of the most exciting interest—the Church, through Melville and others, asserting in the boldest language the independence and authority of her great popular tribunals—the court summoning them to trial for sedition—they declining the jurisdiction of the council—the final resort to banishment and imprisonment,—and in short, all the regular features of a great struggle between new rights and new ideas on the one hand, and the headlong blindness of despotic violence on the other:—until at last the conflict closes for the time with our Second Period, in the passing of a series of acts—known in the history of Scotland as the Black Acts of 1584—which laid down on paper the genuine principles of autocracy—abolished the whole system of the Presbyterian Church, with its popular Assemblies, and new notions of liberty, and all such seditious doctrines as interfered with the supreme authority of Kings, over all causes, whether civil or religious.

[1584-92.] Such is the second great epoch in the history of the Church of Scotland. Eight years run on, and we have already reached a third,—and this, perhaps, the most remarkable of all. No new principles appear, to detain us on this short intervening period. The French and English interests had been still contending, and the latter had gained the day.

The Earl of Arran, a profligate and haughty favourite, who had replaced the Duke of Lennox, had been driven from his place by the armed interference of the Protestant nobles. The natural result was a great change in the condition of the Church. The Presbyterian principle was far too deeply rooted to be shaken by the acts of a servile Parliament, and in despite of violence and persecution, had risen rapidly in power. One only consequence is to be traced from the temporary supremacy of such Prelacy and Prelates as were represented by Adamson, then Archbishop of St. Andrews;—Episcopacy had gathered up against itself in the memory of the Scottish Church more and more bitter associations. Connected, as it had been on every occasion, with the worst vices of civil government, and exhibiting in its own character the alternate features of servility and unscrupulous ambition—making humble submissions (as even in this period it was compelled to do) to Presbyterian discipline, when the hand of arbitrary power did not enable it to assert its usurpations with success—represented by such men as Adamson, whose course amongst his brethren was one of dissimulation and intrigue,—we cannot be surprised that it laid up in store for itself an increasing weight of odium, or that the more rational and moderate grounds on which the leading ministers of the Reformed Church had originally avoided it, were gradually giving place to a more unruly and fanatic hatred.

We can hear the storm gathering louder and louder in all documents of this period. Take, as

an example, a letter from two ministers of Edinburgh to their flocks, from whom they had fled in fear of the violence of the court, whose measures they had opposed. In this letter, when speaking of the whole form of spiritual government in Scotland as "grounded on the Word of God," we meet with this parenthesis, "whereunto the cursed Bishops subscribed themselves, as their hand-writ will testify." Again, the Bishops are spoken of, "some as gross libertines, whose infamy is seen of you all; some sacrilegious dilapidators of their whole benefices; some disturbers of the state of the poor Church; ALL wanting warrant in conscience of their calling; yea, all bearing testimony of evil conscience, in that they now condemn that which before they subscribed as undoubted truth." And be it observed that this language, harsh and angry as it is, is substantially borne out by facts. It is true, and it could not be otherwise than true, that the occupation of those bishoprics by Presbyterian ministers, in violation of their own vows, in violation of the laws of their Church, and on such conditions, was accompanied by personal unworthiness; it is true that they dilapidated their benefices by shameful pactions; it is true that, for such a course, they had no excuse of conviction—no "warrant in conscience;" not merely because they had subscribed contrary principles, but because their "calling" was not that of a real Bishop. Their office was not Episcopal. The only road to it was servility and deceit; the only ends to be gained by it were those of ambition or of avarice. How, then, could feelings of indignation

and hatred fail to gather—how could the national mind fail to become distempered?

But the dreadful consequences of long oppression upon the powers of popular sentiment were not at this time to be yet fully shown; the childish levity and pliability of James's nature avoided the tremendous penalties which were to fall upon the far higher character and more earnest mind of his unfortunate and misguided son. With no inconsiderable talents, and enormous vanity, James was, in all the circumstances of his life, the creature of passion and of impulse. The same monarch who, in 1584, had embodied in acts of Parliament his aversion to the principles of Presbytery, was now ready, in 1592, to sign and sanction statutes which declared those principles to be founded on Divine authority. But he had been angry and thwarted then; he was in high good humour now. He had but lately returned from Denmark, whence he had brought his bride, and where he had enjoyed his time in all the varied pursuits of his clever and unstable mind. The hawks and hounds of Scotland had been exchanged for those of Denmark, his battles with Andrew Melville on the polity of the Church for disputes with foreign divines on predestination and free will, and his translating of psalms with George Buchanan for discussions on astronomy with Tycho Brahe. Now, when he was again at home, all things wore an unusually smiling aspect. The Church was rejoicing in the frustration of some Catholic intrigues, and making rapid strides towards the full re-establishment of her popular system. Ministers of strong Presbyterian

opinions were the favourite chaplains of the King, and the brethren of Andrew Melville conducted the ceremony of the young Queen's anointment and consecration. The Prelates were left to languish under the censures of the Assembly, and James had annexed the great temporalities to the crown. Nor did the good humour of this monarch (whom Scottish "Churchmen" have represented as devoutly labouring to secure for his fanatic people the blessings of apostolical succession) confine itself to such interested measures as this. He harangued alternately the people and the General Assembly; eulogised the Presbyterian constitution of the Church; blessed God he had been born a King in one so pure; stigmatised the English service as an "ill-said mass," *minus* only the elevation of the Host; and charged all the office-bearers whom he addressed to "stand by their purity." More substantial benefits were also added. The whole system of the Presbyterian Church, as laid down in the Second Book of Discipline, was embodied in a series of acts of Parliament, which, to this day, are those on which the northern Establishment is founded.

I shall not dwell here on the celebrated statutes of 1592. They have survived the revolutions, and counter-revolutions, which were still to follow in the distracted history of the Scottish Church, only from that one great cause to which all human institutions must ever owe any strength or permanence they may attain—from their coincidence with the principles which had been impressed upon the mind of the people, for whose governance they were framed. The acts of 1584

were the accidental products of temporary circumstance; an expression of nothing but what must surely die,—the pride and instinct of individual will. They have, therefore, long since ceased to guide the decisions of the Judge, or to be remembered, except in the same list with those other innumerable statutes which illustrate the slow progress of human government. Those of 1592, on the contrary, possessed the one great principle of political life—a solid and real foundation in the empire of ideas. They have, therefore, lived. Very different opinions will, of course, prevail as to the merits of that ecclesiastical system which they established. It is one, certainly, which,—more, I think, from external than internal causes,—has not been preserved, by its broad and popular basis; from the same evil which has, more or less, befallen all the Churches of the Reformed—the disintegrating process of Dissent. Yet withal, it is a system involving principles whose important character it is impossible to mistake; principles which are being re-produced with fresh vigour at the present moment, in forms both new and old, and are evidently destined to play a prominent part in the future history of religion.

Such is the third great epoch in the history of the Church of Scotland; but it affords us no place of rest. It is an isolated point, which is again immediately covered by the troubled elements which surround it; and, like the summit of a rock, which is only for a moment seen above the waves and surf, its real prominence is concealed, until after the waters of revolution have assuaged.

CHAPTER IV.

HISTORICAL SKETCH CONTINUED FROM THE STATUTES
OF 1592, TO THE ACCESSION OF JAMES VI. TO
THE THRONE OF ENGLAND.

[1592-1603.] IN the eight years which preceded, we have seen the contest oscillate between its two extremes; we have seen the bold principles of freedom, which characterised the Presbyterian constitution, pass from the period of their greatest outward depression, to that of their greatest outward triumph. Eight years more, and we shall find the picture well nigh reversed; steps more than preliminary had been then already taken towards the longest triumph of the antagonist powers; and all things were preparing for the fatal re-action of the fourth and most stormy epoch. Scarcely had the statutes of 1592 been registered, when the current of events began to set most rapidly in a direction contrary to that which had led to their enactment. The proximate cause of the renewed contest between the Monarch and the Church is still to be found in the same respective tendencies, which have already been explained. It was a period of strong excitement and alarm from the continuance of Catholic intrigue. The eagle eye of the Presbyterian ministers discovered its existence, when all the vigilance and suspicion of their fear and their intolerance were

required for its detection. It was their duty, and it was their passion, to watch over the safety of the Reformed religion, and wherever its interests were concerned, there they were resolved to exert their influence and authority. No political transaction was then without its bearing upon religion. There were none which did not stand in intimate connection with the safety of the Church: there were none, therefore, which did not demand the attention of its great popular tribunals—none on which it was not their duty to take an active part, whether in urging the Sovereign to more active measures, or in opposing him if he allowed other motives to determine his course than such as actuated themselves. It would have been strange if such men, the representatives of such a spirit, had not soon come into collision with such a King as James. A thousand different motives were capable of influencing him. Jealousy, and ambition, a love of controversy, and a love of show, a natural repugnance to the free principles of Presbytery, and as natural a predilection for the compliant spirit he had been accustomed to associate with Prelacy, combined to lead him through a long series of insincere professions, into determined opposition to the system which an irresistible influence of national feeling had forced upon him.

Such were the inward tendencies: I need not long dwell on the outward facts. Those first encountered are typical enough. In the very year in which the statutes of 1592 were passed, certain figures were seen flitting about the land with more than usual frequency, which, by the searching glance of Andrew

Melville and his brethren, were discovered to be Popish priests. Those mysterious visitants did not come for nothing; whispers had long been heard from across the seas that the Catholic Powers had eyes and ears in Scotland. Something must be done. In the economy of ancient Rome, it was her resort, in great emergencies, to concentrate all the powers of her government in one; in like manner it was determined by the Church to concentrate all its organs of sight and hearing in a committee, to whom was given the solemn charge, *ne quid detrimenti Ecclesia caperet*. This was reasonable enough. There was nothing to oppose: the King gave his assent. The ecclesiastical executive proved more vigilant and more resolute than the civil. In December, 1592, it having become known to a minister in the West, that a certain Catholic gentleman had proceeded towards the mouth of the Firth of Clyde, and that the purpose of his journey was probably neither private business nor private pleasure, the minister was soon at the head of a body of Glasgow students, armed with religious zeal, and of men accoutred with more substantial weapons. In a few hours, at the dead of night, they had reached the harbour where the Popish agent had already embarked for Spain. He was taken. Letters were found on his person which betrayed a formidable conspiracy for the overthrow of the Government, and the landing of a Spanish army. The Earls of Huntly, Errol, and Angus, besides others of inferior note, were implicated in this design.

The Church was thrown into a state of high excitement. Conventions, assemblies, excommunications,

addresses and remonstrances to the King followed in rapid succession. James alternately smiled and frowned; issued proclamations against the "Popish Lords;" appointed thanksgiving for so providential an escape from so alarming a conspiracy; and quarrelled with the ministers who had been the instruments of its detection. It was not his wish, at this moment, to proceed to extremities against Roman Catholics. There was a large and powerful party attached to that religion in England. Elizabeth was already tottering towards the grave, and he was anxious to secure his own succession. Yet the direction taken by the energies of the Church was not one which he dared to oppose openly. According to the principles then acknowledged by both parties, it was the duty of both the ecclesiastical and civil powers to "purge idolatry from the land." But it was evident to the Church that he was more offended at the frequent conventions and assemblies held under its authority, than thankful for the assistance which its energies afforded him. And in truth this is not surprising. The tone of those Assemblies was such as never had been known before in any body in the State. In them the feudal monarchy of Scotland first encountered the power of popular opinion, and the uncompromising character of an alliance between notions of political right and of religious truth. *They* would take no cognisance of private motives. They had their own strong, stern notions of public duty: their axioms were embodied in the laws of the land, and were undisputed by the King. If *he* did not choose to practise the principles he professed, *they* would do all

in their power to bring them into effect *without him*. James alternately resisted and gave way: one day took arms against the "Papist Earls," and the next entered into secret terms for their submission; and was accordingly either supported or remonstrated with by the Church. His estrangement naturally increased. He felt himself urged on by a power whose movements he might head, but could not control. He could not have his own way in his own dominions.

It was natural he should look around him eagerly for help, and what more obvious resource than the reintroduction of Prelates in the Church? But how was he to proceed? The power of the General Assembly could not be overthrown with ease. It was a *fact* too deeply seated in the ideas of the nation to be openly assailed. Composed as that great body was of a large portion of the most influential laity, and supported by the great mass of the people,—the lesser barons and the rising commercial classes,—its meetings were looked forward to with more interest than those of Parliament itself; James was wont to display his oratory before it, and to render to it many pledges as to the government of his kingdom. He must therefore proceed gradually, and with caution. Opportunities were not wanting to originate a quarrel. Fierce attacks and invectives had been long indulged in by the bigotry of the English clergy against the principles of the Church of Scotland, attacks for which they were soon destined to reap a terrible reward—and which had already roused indications of a corresponding spirit both in England and in Scotland. At

the instance of Elizabeth's ambassador, a minister of St. Andrews was called to account before the Privy Council for certain violent speeches delivered from the pulpit. The minister declined the judgment of the Council on a cause which he declared to belong exclusively to the jurisdiction of the Assemblies of the Church, as being purely ecclesiastical. This was one cause of rupture; another arose from a momentary tumult which was roused in Edinburgh, by a panic of Catholic conspiracy. The King either was, or pretended to be enraged; the commissioners of the General Assembly were banished from Edinburgh, and a convention of Estates and General Assembly, were summoned to convene in February, 1597, to consider the "whole order and policy of the Church."

And here it is well worthy of remark, that during those years of struggle, through which Presbytery has been seen passing since the arrival of Andrew Melville, that change had become still more advanced which I have already traced in comparing the First and Second Books of Discipline. Although the General Assembly, the lower courts, and the pulpits of the Church, were incessantly concerning themselves with political affairs, their language was every day becoming more stringent and dogmatic as to the absolute independence of spiritual authority from all civil interference or control. But we must never forget to distinguish carefully between the really fundamental principles of Presbytery, and those which had arisen from external circumstances. We shall then find no difficulty in explaining to ourselves inconsistencies

much greater and more real than this. This one, indeed, is apparent only. The conduct of the Presbyterian Church in interfering with political affairs during those years, and its language at the same time, insisting on the distinction between civil and ecclesiastical jurisdiction, were in fact only different, but not inconsistent, modes of defending one and the same position. Its faith, its liberty and its discipline were constantly exposed to the attacks and intrigues of external power. When these came in the form of direct attempts by the civil government, it was natural that the Church should fall back on the independence of its own authority, and fortify its camp by throwing up semi-doctrinal breastworks of defence. When the same danger appeared in the more indirect form of contests between rival parties in the State, one friendly, and the other adverse, it was utterly impossible to avoid taking some part when its own existence was at stake. In fact there were no affairs of politics at that time which were not also pre-eminently affairs of religion. If the Assemblies and pulpits of Presbytery had been silent on the factions of that time, they would have been silent on the nearest interests of the Church. On their vigilance, activity, and resolution, depended the religious and civil liberties of the people, exposed as they were to the combined danger of Romish intrigue, of servile Parliaments, and of an ambitious, deceitful King. It is trivial to remark on the occasional or frequent violence and fanaticism of the pulpit-language of this period. Was there ever any contest in which such interests were at stake, such dangers in view, or such

enemies to be overcome, in which such language was not frequent? It is trivial, too, to remark on the interference with secular affairs, when in fact there were no political affairs which did not derive their whole significance from the interests of religion.

But although it is easy to reconcile the language of the Church with its actual conduct, when reference is made to the circumstances in which it was placed, there is a deeper inconsistency between the new forms which that language had now assumed, and the more fundamental principles of the Presbyterian constitution. Yet if we keep clearly in view what these principles really were, we shall be able to assign their proper rank to mere accidental formulæ, however erroneous may have been that assigned to them by the Presbyterian Church itself. We must remember that as men do not always use language consistent with their principles, so neither do they always see the principles which would follow from their language. We have already seen how the Scotch Reformers laid down doctrines as to the interpretation of Scripture, and the want of authoritative power over it in "Councils, realms, or nations," which of necessity involved the ultimate independence of private judgment, and consequently the duty of toleration. Yet we have also seen how completely they overlooked this consequence, and maintained the duty of punishing, even with death, certain forms of religious error. But of these two contradictory positions we know which was primary and essential—which was merely accidental and temporary. On the ultimate right of every individual mind to put its own interpretation



on the Word of God, rests the authority of the Reformers for all they said or did—and must always rest the power of the Christian world to cast off, from time to time, the corruptions which may encrust its faith. We know therefore that the principles, on which this right depends, are essential and fundamental to the Scottish, as well as to all other, Reformations; and we may be sure that whatever was inconsistent therewith, in the language or conduct of those men, was due to some partial view arising out of some accidental circumstance.

Keeping the same law of analysis steadily in view in reference to other more important contradictions among the apparent principles of Presbytery, we may, always distinguish with certainty between that which is essential, and that which is merely accidental. For example, the language which had now become common respecting the independence and authority of spiritual power,—above all, the appropriation of Scripture texts on which that language sought to justify itself,—would involve principles utterly subversive of the power which Christian legislatures, under many circumstances, may legitimately, and in some, would be bound to exercise; and not less subversive, too, of the liberty of private judgment. That language was logically inconsistent with any but a priestly idea, both of the nature of the Church, and of the extent of its authority. Accordingly, it has been a frequent charge against Presbytery at this period, that it attempted to establish over the civil power, and over individual conscience, a spiritual tyranny as bad as that of Rome. And certainly, innumerable passages might

be quoted from the documents of the time, which, if the principles they imply were logically evolved, would justify this accusation to the full. But there are other passages equally numerous, and very often contiguous in the same papers, which lay down doctrines directly contradictory,—showing that what was extravagant in the claims of Presbytery, or rather in the words in which it clothed them, was due to its passions, not its principles. In one breath we are sometimes told that it is the duty and right of the civil magistrate to see that the office-bearers of the Church “do their duty,” and “judge aright according to the Word of God;” in the next breath he is deprived of all independent “judgment” as to what is, or what is not, “according” to that Word. He is told he may not venture to take upon himself “to interpret Scripture in matters of controversy,”—this power being given of God to the “Pastors and Doctors of the Church.”

The close proximity of such contradictory positions is one of the most curious features of the time—reminding us always, that, however excited may be the language in which the liberty of the Church is asserted, or however ambitious the appropriations of Scripture texts, there was something—deep in the principles of Presbytery—which was preventing, and must prevent, its claims from becoming even the same in kind, far less equal in degree, with the claims of Priesthood. But the language to which I refer was sometimes wild and extravagant enough. In one of those “declinatures” of the jurisdiction of the Privy Council, given in by a minister, when cited

to appear before it, to which I have before alluded, we find it asserted, that the "Spiritual office-bearers and ministers of the Church have power to deliver unto Satan—to bind the impenitent in their sins,—to lock out and debar from the kingdom of heaven—having the keys of that kingdom given them of God." And in another paper of this time, language equally rash is used. Among those questions which the King proposed to the Assemblies of the Church, and which they justly considered as intended to "cast in doubt" the whole liberties and government of Presbytery, there is the following query:—"Is it the King separately, or the pastors separately, or both conjointly, that should establish the acts anent the external government of the Church; or what is the form of their conjunction to make laws?" To this the Synod of Fife replies, that the ordinary interpretation of God's Word belongs to the Pastors and Doctors of the Church, and that "Kings and princes ought, by their civil authority, to ratify and approve by their laws, and vindicate by their civil sanction, that which they (the Pastors and Doctors) declare to be God's will out of His Word." In support of such positions, reference is made to the most irrelevant texts, such, for instance, as "Where two or three are gathered together in my name," &c.,—as if this promise had any reference at all to the power of ecclesiastical assemblies, any more than to that of any other assemblies of professing Christians. I could quote many other passages in which the idea of the authority of the Church,—of the absolute distinction between civil and spiritual power,—and of the

independence of the latter on the former, finds expression in language equally extreme, and is referred to texts equally irrelevant or misleading.

Yet however positive may be the form which that idea had now assumed, and however dogmatic the terms in which it was expressed, it is certain that it formed no part of the fundamental or essential principles of Presbytery, but was a growth—a very natural, and even necessary growth—arising from the external circumstances in which it had been placed. It is perfectly true that for more than a hundred years it strikes the eye as one of the most prominent characteristics of the genius of Presbytery; and to this hour it is esteemed essential by a large portion of its members. Prominent, indeed it was, and important too, because the same outward circumstances which had called forth and confirmed it, continued to operate until the Revolution. The duty of persecution was another idea, for many years, as prominent, and as dogmatically enforced. But this has passed away, whilst that of which I am now speaking, the events of every year confirmed as practically all-important. Presbytery was never free from the aggressions of violent or intriguing governments. No wonder, then, if that remarkable change which has been traced between the First and the Second Book of Discipline had become confirmed. But we must never forget how that change had passed; nor, especially, that it was a change. And it may help us to keep more vividly in mind the accidental source from which the idea I speak of arose, if we go a step still further back than the First Book of Discipline.

We have only to remember that it was the father and apostle of that Church,—which now asserted so passionately the absolute and sacred independence of ecclesiastical authority from all secular interference,—who demanded of his followers, in tones of indignant remonstrance, if they “dared esteem that the civil power is now become so profane in God’s eyes that it is sequestered from all intromission with matters of religion?” And how came this opposite idea to be presented to the mind of Knox? Simply because he then had before him opposite external circumstances. The spiritual office-bearers—the “pastors and doctors” of the Church, then existing in Scotland, would not sanction that change which nevertheless was—a Reformation; and which was seen to be so by a powerful party in the State. God help the country and the Church if *to them* had belonged the exclusive right of spiritual government! Yet this was *their* plea; the contrary, therefore, was the plea of Knox. And so easily do men’s conceptions of abstract or doctrinal truth shape themselves to the demands of accidental circumstance, that we find Knox adducing, in support of his argument, as ample an allowance of scriptural quotation, as his disciples were to bring, some twenty years after, in support of an exactly opposite conclusion!

And now, having thus traced to their real source the current language and ideas of Presbytery on this important subject, we know better on what ground it is that our sympathies ought to go heart and soul with it, in its long contests with the civil government and the crown. Let us forget, as well as we can, the

formulæ under which its principles were frequently concealed rather than expressed ; or if we cannot do this, let us interpret them solely by the external circumstances to which they really referred.* Let us concentrate our attention on the fundamental principles of its nature and organisation ; let us remember that its Assemblies represented the body of the Church—not an order of priests ; let us remember that it was the liberty and powers of that body which were at stake ; and, finally, let us remember that though tyrannical powers may be claimed by popular bodies, as well as by others of a more exclusive nature, yet that such claims, if made by Presbytery at all, were at variance with the first principles of its own Reformation ; and will meet their surest refutation when these principles are fully understood.

But to proceed with the history :—I need not now detail the means which were from this time (1597) employed to make the Assemblies of the Presbyterian Church the means of introducing gradually a system which was to supersede their own authority, and overthrow the principles to which we have seen that they were so firmly attached. That they were either corrupt or violent, or both—that they overbore the expression of the national will, whilst they professed to seek for its concurrence,—we require no other evidence than is derived from previous and subsequent events. We know that so great a power of prevailing sentiment, as we have seen engaged in

* See note D.

defence of Presbytery, could not have been suddenly overcome, but by being fraudulently deceived, or violently suppressed; and we know if possible with still greater certainty, that the tremendous burst of excitement which overwhelmed Episcopacy under Charles I. could have proceeded from no other cause than the reaction from long and tyrannical restraint. Such symptoms could only have resulted from one disease. But we are not left to inference, however certain. The process by which the Constitution of the National Church was overthrown, is to be followed in all its steps. We can trace them from the General Assembly of 1597 to that of 1618—"the last *permitted* (such is the *naïve* expression of the "Spottiswoode" Authors) in Scotland, till the memorable one at Glasgow in 1638."

James proceeded with singular caution and address. In the first Assembly in which he began his scheme of innovation, he had to deal with, on the whole, a tolerably free representation of the Church, notwithstanding his strenuous exertions to influence the elections. He was therefore contented with a favourable reply to such demands as this—"that it be not thought unlawful, either for the prince or any pastor, to move doubts, or crave reformation in any points of the external policy and government of the Church that are not essentially concerning salvation, or are not answered *affirmative vel negative* by any express part of Scripture." What, in the abstract, more reasonable than this? what more insidious, when asked by one who had resolved not on partial change—but on total revolution? In the Parliament

of the same year, a remarkable evidence appears of the caution of the King, and of the greatness of the power which compelled him to proceed so warily. It was enacted that such ministers of the Church as were nominated by the King to vacant sees, should have a seat in Parliament as Members of the Spiritual Estate; but all that concerned their status in the Church was expressly referred to James's dealings with the General Assemblies. In the successive meetings of that body for the years 1597—8, and 1600, we find him pursuing his design with much ability, and with a singular want of principle. Intimidation was applied to some; promises of promotion gained a few; unscrupulous falsehoods—such as solemn protestations that he meant not to introduce Bishops in the “Anglican or Popish” meaning of the word—soothed others; and a tyrannical exercise of arbitrary power got rid of the dreaded opposition of the unappeasable Andrew Melville. Yet with all these measures, no greater concession could be obtained than acquiescence in a system similar to that which had been agreed to under the Regencies. The occupants of sees were not even, according to the conditions under which the Assembly of 1600 gave that acquiescence, to have the Episcopal title. They were to have votes in Parliament, but only as a commission from the Church. They were to have no spiritual power superior to their brethren, but to be subject in all things to the jurisdiction of the same tribunals. To these conditions James did not hesitate to assent, although, I need hardly add, without the smallest intention of fulfilling his engagement.

There was a minister present in that Assembly, more cognisant than the majority of his brethren of the King's ultimate designs, from whom evidence is derived on the real history of Scottish Prelacy, which even the "Spottiswoode" Society will respect. This minister was the son of one of the most venerable men among the first founders of the Reformed Church in Scotland—one of those who used to assemble at Calder House to hear the first sermons of Knox, and who had been inaugurated by that Reformer as Superintendent of Lothian and Teviotdale. His son had long been known in the Assemblies of the Church as a frequent member, and had sometimes taken an active part along with his brethren in defence of the Presbyterian constitution. But new prospects had opened up before him, and in the Assembly of 1600 he was one of that "wiser sort," to use his own expression, who, with the King, practised the duplicity of acquiescing in the conditions, or, as they were called, the "caveats," respecting the liberties of the Church, without the smallest intention of allowing them to stand in force; but "in order that without any noise" their own ultimate designs might be effected. This minister's name was JOHN SPOTTISWOODE, the future Archbishop of St. Andrews, and the man chosen—most fittingly—by "Scottish Churchmen" to represent the history of Scottish Prelacy.

But I must hasten onwards, and pass rapidly over a period of eight-and-thirty years, during which the smothered energies of a people were gathering tremendous force. For the three years which

elapsed from the Assembly of 1600 to the accession of James to the throne of England, he continued to feel his way, by very gradual steps, towards the suppression of that spirit of civil and religious freedom which animated the institutions of Presbytery. In the General Assemblies of 1601—2, James himself was present. He indulged his taste for oratory in harangues, swearing that by the grace of God he would live and die in the religion professed in the Church of Scotland; and his passion for display of proficiency in literature and theology, by spouting long verses of the psalms, and pointing out to his ravished hearers the errors of metre and translation. But he was now to be called to another scene, and one in which he was more at liberty to act in the capacity of what he had himself termed a “free and absolute Monarch.”

CHAPTER V.

HISTORICAL SKETCH CONTINUED FROM THE UNION OF THE CROWNS, 1603, TO THE COVENANT, AND GLASGOW ASSEMBLY OF 1638.

[1603—38.] On the 24th of March, 1603, the extraordinary woman who had so long worn the English crown was compelled by death to admit, what even in thought she could never bear whilst living,—a successor to her throne. Before leaving Scotland to take possession of his new inheritance, James delivered, in the church of St. Giles, in Edinburgh, his last Presbyterian harangue, in which he assured the people he meant no farther changes in the government of the Church. But he left his promises behind him when he crossed the Tweed. What was wanting in his mind of permanence of design, was supplied by communion with the bigotry of English “Churchmen;” and before one year had passed we find him exercising his theological acumen in the conference of Hampton Court, and applauded by assembled Bishops as speaking by the power of God, when in the rudest language he upbraided the Nonconformists, and told them to “be away with their snivelling.” For fifteen years we trace the fulfilment of his engagements to his Scottish subjects in a series of acts of the grossest

and most illegal tyranny. In defiance of the unrepealed statutes of 1592, which affirmed the right of the Church to hold, with or without royal assent, yearly meetings of its great Assembly, he discharged that body altogether, except when summoned by himself,—imprisoned and banished those ministers who asserted their constitutional privileges,—and having invited Andrew Melville, with some others of the same uncompromising character, to London, detained them there by violence. These measures being taken, James was no longer afraid of General Assemblies, provided the members were elected according to the injunctions of his own letters missive. The steps by which civil and religious tyranny was riveted on the nation are curious and instructive. In the mock Assembly of 1606, it was obtained that Bishops should be the permanent presidents of such Presbyteries as lay within their diocese. But before any farther advance of spiritual power was demanded, it was deemed necessary to raise to the highest point the civil and judicial privileges of the Episcopal order. Alienated lands and revenues were bought up to restore their wealth and dignity; and while their own riches were thus secured, the endowments of all other ministers were placed under their control by warrant from the crown. John Spottiswoode, now Archbishop of Glasgow, was made a civil judge, as Lord of Session; and finally that infamous court,—one of the great grievances then accumulating against the House of Stuart the indignation of the English people, and which was now in great activity under the guidance of the bigot

Bancroft,—the Court of High Commission, was planted in the north.

These measures being taken, another mock Assembly was called at Glasgow in 1610, from which James demanded, in terms the most insolent and despotic, a farther surrender of the liberties of the Church. These he of course obtained. A larger measure of spiritual power was conceded to the Bishops; and the nugatory condition was suffered to remain, that they should be still subject to General Assemblies, with concurrence of the King. At last, in 1618, another such Assembly was called at Perth, in which it was resolved to introduce into the religious services of a nation, deeply imbued with the principles and prejudices of Presbytery, the same obnoxious ceremonies which were daily adding in England to the number, and rousing the spirit, of Nonconformists. In proposing the adoption of these, Spottiswoode addressed the Assembly in a speech which is a monument either of the basest deceit or of the most contemptible servility. The ceremonies, he said, were certainly “new and uncouth:” they were none of his choosing: if the Bishops could have dissuaded his Majesty from them, they would have done so; but seeing it was the will of him “whom he held it religion to offend,” he counselled them to bow willingly under the authority of the Prince. But the acquiescence of the royal nominees who constituted that Assembly was not the acquiescence of the Church: and the Court of High Commission had thenceforward abundance of employment in the exercise of its persecuting powers.

As regarded will, at least, the Bishops did not need the injunction of the King to "go on and use the sword which had been planted in their hand, and to let it rust no longer." But so dangerous and unyielding was the spirit of the people, that they seem to have been moved by fear to proceed with considerable caution; and it was found utterly impossible to enforce any general conformity with the "Five Articles of Perth."

Such was the state of Scotland—every day adding to the deep alienation of the popular mind—when, in 1625, the death of James I. placed a new and very different Monarch on the throne. Yet the same course which had been pursued by the pedantic, treacherous, tyrannical, and withal childish father, was continued in a form only aggravated by the virtues of the more serious minded son.

The cause of Prelacy in Scotland has passed through three stages, in none of which does it seem to have occupied any honourable place; but we must carefully distinguish between them. We must never confound the motives which first suggested its adoption under the Regents with those which subsequently influenced James I., or, still less, with those which actuated Charles. Avarice began the contest under the first; vanity, love of power, hatred of civil and religious freedom continued it under the second; whilst the purest and most narrow-minded bigotry brought it, under the last, to its terrible result. But, under each and all, it was pursued by means grossly tyrannical and unjust, often dishonourable and base, and always expressing the most reckless disregard of

the affections and feelings of the people, as well as of their constitutional and legal rights.

Eight years pass on from the accession of Charles I., and we find him in the midst of feasting and revelry at the ancient Palace of the House of Stuart. They had been eight eventful years for England ; the antagonist principles of civil and religious despotism, and the claims and rights of freemen, had already come into ominous collision, on the floor of the House of Commons. Charles, and Laud, and Wentworth had already arrayed against them that great company of extraordinary men who cluster round the name of Hampden. This was the period when the former number had quenched by violence the opposition of the latter, and were preparing, by every species of bigotry and oppression, for their own tremendous overthrow. It was the deadly calm which precedes the hurricane ; and Charles and Laud had determined on the final reduction of the Scottish people to spiritual and temporal obedience. Their Church was still deeply tainted with the leaven of Presbytery ; James had known the temper of his countrymen better than did his son ; the clergy had very generally refused the ceremonies imposed at Perth ; and the older Scottish Bishops, with Spottiswoode at their head, had been made aware by the heaving of the ground beneath them, that they must be wary and circumspect. But Laud knew little of this ; for what he did know, he cared not ; and there were a number of men more recently elevated to the Episcopal Bench in Scotland, who had not risen like Spottiswoode, through Presbyteries and General Assemblies, and

who were to the full as reckless as the English Prelate. In all things, Laud was resolved the Scottish service should be brought up to the level, or above it, of the English ritual. He little knew the elements he had to deal with ; he met a spirit as determined as his own ; he roused a bigotry almost as frantic, but having—what his had not—right and justice on its side.

The storm, however, advanced amidst flowers and sunshine. All was joy and festival round the King at Holyrood. But amidst the lavish expenditure of the Scottish nobles, the prodigality of their feasts, and the sumptuousness of their caparisons and dress—symptoms were observed of the real condition of the people's mind. Those, it was remarked by Charles himself, who wished to recommend themselves in Parliament, to favour out of doors, spoke in a tone of decided opposition to the Court. The persons whom he shunned, in his private intercourse, were ever, he also noticed, the nearest to his person, and the most eager to be seen in converse with him when in the public streets. The courteous manners of the high-bred gentleman, and the natural amiability of his personal character, could not repel their civility and devotion ; and he saw that when a good impression was to be made on his Scottish subjects, it was needful that those from whom he was most averse should seem his nearest counsellors. Poor Charles the First ! Who does not deplore that the glances of that grave mild eye, which saw so much, had not seen far more ! But he was a bigot, and bigots were on his right hand and on his left. That a new Liturgy, at variance with their most

deeply-rooted sentiments, should be forcibly imposed on the Scottish people, was a proposition he hardly heard disputed, unless when the wary Spottiswoode recommended caution on such grounds of expediency as Charles's nature could little sympathise with, or understand. He did indeed hear debates. The pride of the Scottish Bishops was offended by the haughtiness and temper of their English brother. They were willing to oppress others, but they could not bear to be dictated to, themselves; and a passionate dispute arose as to whether the new Liturgy should be that used by Laud, or another form to be composed by Scottish Prelates for the peculiar use of the Scottish Church. Their pretended patriotism, it seemed to Laud, was really their own pride of heart. Indeed, it could be nothing else. Men who had trampled on the feelings and violated the constitution of their country, and who were at that moment preparing for still more aggravated oppression, can hardly be held to have redeemed their character for public spirit by rebelling against being compelled to use precisely the same form of words which the Bishop of London used. It mattered little which of them gained the day. The time was already almost come when other voices besides those of either Laud or Spottiswoode must needs be heard.

A commission was at last granted to the Scottish Bishops to prepare a Book of Canons and a Liturgy, which, when finished, were to be sent up for revision by Laud and other English Prelates. But all this was secret. Some public acts were however done,

before Charles returned to England, which added something to the causes already in active operation. More Bishops were raised to the highest civil functions; the Court of Session and the Privy Council were crowded still more with croziers. The people had been long finally estranged; the higher nobility were now mortally offended. But for four years all was calm—so deadly still, that to the superficial eye, it seemed like rest. Some acts of gross tyranny in civil matters perpetrated by Charles, and many in ecclesiastical affairs by the now revived activity of the Court of High Commission, seemed to be submitted to in all the quietness of passive obedience. The Bishops were still concocting their Liturgy and their Canons. This was well known, and a spirit of unsubduable resistance was being infused into the ambushed ranks of Presbytery. The mysterious influences of that extraordinary time were deeply but silently at work. Notions of mere political right were being succoured by religious belief. Already was the temper of the times seeking expression in the language of the Law and the Prophets; and throughout the pulpits and parishes of Scotland, a patient waiting was enjoined “for the time when the Lord would deliver Zion.”

No haste was manifested or felt, to begin premature resistance. It was seen, as Lord Clarendon informs us, that the temper and violence of the Bishops would soon be their own undoing; and so it was. At last, the Book of Canons was completed, and forthwith without farther communication with the clergy, or the assembling of any

council, either civil or ecclesiastical, there issued a Proclamation from the King, commanding universal and immediate obedience. This was despotic enough; but it was the appropriate introduction to a Book of Canons which laid down the principles of despotism with the noblest candour. Charles I. claimed supremacy not less ample than that which had belonged to the Kings of Israel:—he was to be King “after the pattern” of David and his line. And as if to give a practical example of the powers he claimed, one of the Canons enjoined the uniform practice of a Liturgy which was yet in the workshop of the Bishops. But the crisis was now at hand. The Liturgy, too, was at last completed; and after Laud and his coadjutors had given it their final touches, and made it (where it differed) more like the Roman missal than the English form, it was sent down to Scotland, and after some postponement and delays, the order was promulgated for its being read in all the churches on the ensuing Sunday.

Who has not heard of the scenes which followed—how on the memorable Sunday of the 23rd July, 1637, the two Archbishops of Glasgow and St. Andrews, with many others of their order, the Members of the Privy Council, and Court of Session, all in their robes of office, went in solemn procession to the Cathedral Church of St. Giles in Edinburgh—how a prodigious concourse had assembled there;—how when the book was opened, and the Dean began to read, there was first a murmur, and then a roar;—how the excitement rose till it came to madness;—how the Bishop commanded the Dean to proceed;—how

Janet Geddes seconded less effectual remonstrances with her three-legged stool;—how the Archbishop interposed his dignity, but in vain;—how the civil magistrates were then appealed to;—and, in short, how the multitude, swaying to and fro like a drunken man, gave dreadful witness to the wickedness and folly of tyrannical dictation in matters of religion and forms of prayer.

This was emphatically the “lesson for the day.” But it had yet need of being read in a graver tone than the frenzied shouts of an excited mob. The tumult of St. Giles’s in Edinburgh, was a mere riot of the lower populace—so said the Bishops—and in this they said the truth. Not only were the rioters generally of the lower classes, but, in great proportion, they were women. This encouraged the Prelates to persevere; it ought rather, in connection with the deeper symptoms which had long been visible, to have warned them to desist. They might have seen that this ebullition on the surface of society was but the evidence of a fermentation which lay far beneath it. But there was a bandage over the eyes of those men, such as only their own bad passions could have tied, and nothing but the most dire experience could unloose. Despatches were sent up to London; and others in due course came back to Edinburgh. The commands of Charles, and the taunts of Laud, urged the Bishops on their course. Measures were taken to compel the clergy to buy the Liturgy, and to use it. The two Archbishops of Glasgow and St. Andrews directed the execution of this decree in their respective dioceses; and the Episcopal nominees, who

held the Presbyterian title of Moderator in their Presbyteries, were commissioned to announce it to the clergy.

The Prelates trusted that there were now none left of those who had studied in the school of Knox; and few survivors of that determined band who were wont to rally under the leadership of Andrew Melville. Imprisonment, exile, and death, had cleared the ground of most; compliance had been forced on others; and of the older school of Presbyterian ministers, only one or two aged men were left. But that continuity of spirit, or direction, in which consists the sameness of political and religious parties, had never been destroyed. The stream had not been lost, as the Bishops hoped; it had only been passing under-ground. Fretting and foaming in its contracted channel—becoming every step of its progress more fierce,—less tractable,—it had only been accumulating force to burst again into open light, more than ever an “exulting and abounding river.”

The announcement of the decree respecting the Service Book in the Presbytery of St. Andrews, evoked at last the spirit of the storm. It appeared on that occasion in no violent or striking aspect; its voice was low, calm, respectful. There was nothing to excite alarm. Few could have foreseen the future course of him who was seen to rise in that Assembly, and, supported by only two of his brethren, profess his willingness to buy the book, but his determined refusal to bind himself to its use. The robed and mitred Prelates of Charles I. had, but a short time

before, quailed before the fury of an ignorant mob in the Cathedral of St. Giles at Edinburgh; they would hardly, if they had been present in the Presbytery of St. Andrews, have deigned to notice the appearance of a man who was destined in a few short months to trample their lawless tyranny in the dust. But the loudest shouts and execrations of the Edinburgh mob were as the petulant outcries of a child when compared with the few but studied words of the Minister of Leuchars.

That minister had already passed through a somewhat remarkable career; and had now reached an age when we are generally nearer the end, than the commencement, of the more active scenes of life. At the age of fifty-four he was only about to enter on the course which was to connect for ever the name of ALEXANDER HENDERSON with the most memorable events of his time and country. He had, indeed, been known—well known, before. In early life he had attracted the notice of Gladstones, then Archbishop of St. Andrews, and had been presented by him to the parish of which he was still the minister. The client of a most obnoxious Prelate, and the avowed champion of a cause opposed to all the opinions and liberties of his countrymen, Henderson was appointed pastor of a flock who rose, in open violence, to resist his settlement. The very ordination service was performed in a church with closed doors, and Henderson himself had to effect his entrance by a window. He was, among his people, as an hireling and a stranger. A few years pass on, and we find him amongst the number of those who took every

opportunity, and used every exertion which circumstances admitted, in opposing the farther innovations of the new Primate, Spottiswoode. How came this change to be effected? How came the client of Gladstones, and the champion of Prelacy, to be the deposer of Spottiswoode, and the author of the Covenant? Various causes are mentioned as having prepared the way; he contracted a friendship for one or two leading Presbyterian ministers; his patron Gladstones died; and the innovations of the new Primate involved new principles, and even, as it appeared to many, new doctrines; all these things, we are told, tended to alter the direction of his mind. But of the moment of final change, an account, strikingly characteristic of the times, has been given to us. At an administration of the communion in a neighbouring parish, a celebrated leader of the Presbyterian brethren was expected to officiate. There were none who had not heard of Bruce, the minister of Kinneard. He was then one of the most remarkable men in the Church of Scotland. He had enjoyed great influence at the court of James, before his accession to the English crown; and his pulpit addresses were said to have a peculiar power of leaving solemn impressions on his audience. Henderson went to hear him; and the first words uttered—uttered with a slow and solemn emphasis—pierced the minister of Leuchars to the soul:—"He that cometh not in by the door, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber." Henderson left the church a changed, or as he himself termed it, in the language of his day, a "*converted*" man. Thenceforward, to the moment

when first introduced to the notice of the reader, he was ever foremost amongst those who resisted, as well openly as in secret, the system imposed by Charles I.

The consequences of Henderson's protest in the Presbytery of St. Andrews, placed him almost immediately at the head of his country and his Church, in one of the most remarkable revolutions which history records. The events which followed can hardly be told more rapidly than they occurred. It was on the 10th of August that the mandate of the Archbishop was issued; it must have been about the middle of the month that Henderson announced his determination to resist; and on the 23rd of the same month we find him, pressed by a more formal charge from the Bishops, by a Messenger-at-Arms, laying before the Privy Council of Scotland a Petition or Remonstrance, in which the grand objection was at once boldly taken,—that the Service Book was imposed by unconstitutional authority,—that neither the Parliament nor the General Assembly had been consulted in the matter—that these were the only bodies which could legally govern the Church and Country,—and that the people were averse, and did not wish to change their worship. In this petition Henderson was joined by several ministers, who had repaired to Edinburgh under the same necessity. Already was the standard he had raised gathering supporters round it; and Henderson was aware that, for every one who openly appeared, there were thousands who still lay concealed; sympathy was extending in every class and rank; it was present even at the Council board. The Bishops were out-

voted—the petition was in part sustained—the order for using the Liturgy was suspended until further orders from the King—and the remonstrant brethren were dismissed with a promise that, by the 20th of September, they should receive their answer.

I need hardly explain what was the advice of Laud, or the answer of Charles I. It was such as was fully expected, and had been well prepared for. The rising discontents of England had already sounded from across the Tweed, and mingling with the kindred murmurs of the north, confirmed the general resolution of the people. Active measures had been taken to secure national support in so great a national cause. Leaders had sprung up in every direction, who were prepared to speak the public sentiment; and some members of the higher nobility—among whom were the Earls of Sutherland and Wemyss—had embarked their exertions in the cause. It was under altered circumstances indeed that Henderson repaired the second time to Edinburgh. The imperative orders of the King for the enforcement of universal conformity were received about the middle of September, and were instantly met at the Council table by a petition and remonstrance, as before. But the parties who now presented that petition were no longer confined to a few non-conforming ministers. As the King's Commissioner and the members of the Privy Council moved up that long line of street which ran from the Palace of Holyrood to the Council Chambers, they were greeted with the respectful salutations of a concourse whose "supplication" was seconded by a spirit which none

who saw them could mistake. There were there lords and barons, burgesses and ministers. The Council, as well they might, showed symptoms of hesitation and alarm. Again and again there was the same necessity to report to London: again and again were the Presbyterians referred to a future day; and always at the appointed time, the same concourse filled the streets of Edinburgh. Amongst those at this time conspicuous in the crowd, was one who, for his desperate exertions against the cause which he was now supporting, has won in history an almost heroic name. This was the Marquis of Montrose. In vain was every effort made to break up so formidable a combination. In vain were proclamations heralded at the Cross, commanding the supplicants to disperse. Bolder and bolder steps evinced the determination of the people. The Bishops were impeached before the Council, as the cause and the promoters of all those acts of illegality which threatened to subvert the laws and liberties of Scotland. All orders in the State, except their own, put their names to this national arrangement. Spottiswoode and his brethren were paralysed. The Council were still more alarmed. Continued delays betrayed their sense of weakness; whilst each period of postponement added to the strength and to the disciplined organisation of the people. The celebrated institution of the "Four Tables" arose. This was a permanent committee, representing the nobles, the counties, the burghs, and the clergy. The ablest and most determined men were thus enabled continuously to direct the energies of the whole.

At last, in February, 1638, the King's Commissioner and the Council reported to their master that the danger was becoming every day more imminent; and the former himself repaired to London, and laid before his Majesty a true account of his affairs in Scotland. Charles had not hitherto fully known the truth. He looked downcast, we are told, and pensive. But Laud, and the temper of which that Prelate was the type, would admit of no surrender. He had already braved, and was now braving, the indignant murmurs of the English people. He had cut off the ears of Burton, Bastwick, and Prynne. He had directed, with the most determined perseverance, the energies of the Star Chamber and of the Court of High Commission, against all Puritan and pestilent deniers of the Divine right of Bishops. The King had just gained the great cause against Hampden in the Exchequer Chamber; and the Judges of England had laid down the principle that Rex was Lex. Was that a time, then, to yield to a mob of discontented Scotchmen? Charles, in a fatal hour, determined to persevere. Measures of violence might now exasperate, but they could not suppress the resolution of the people. The Proclamation which finally approved the enforcement of the liturgy, and denounced the supplicants as traitors, was met, as before, by a protest from the Commissioners; and this was supported by the presence of a great concourse of "supplicants," who now, at last, gave evidence of their fears, and their determination, by appearing **ARMED.**

It was now evident to all that but one step in

advance on either side, and the opposing parties could meet on no other ground than the field of battle. It was a moment when some minds—those less immediately under the power of popular excitement—were sure to hesitate, or at least to pause. One only chance remained to the Council and to Charles. Among the leading “supplicants” there were many different shades of sentiment. There were some—stern Presbyterians of the older school—who would accept of nothing short of an entire replacement of the Church on the same basis on which it had been raised by the hands of Knox and Melville,—on which it had been settled by the statutes of 1592,—and from which it had since been so unconstitutionally removed. There were some who had entered the Church at a later period, and would have admitted the modified Episcopacy which had been first attempted. There were some who objected to the Service Book, only as containing tenets at variance with the Scotch Confession—tenets which were styled Arminian, and indicated, as they thought, a Romanist direction. In short, there were some who might be persuaded to accept of one concession, and others who would be content with less. The Council had ample authority to temporise. The danger was perceived by Henderson, and by him, also, the remedy appears in a great measure to have been devised. Seven-and-fifty years before, when, too, the national mind had been under the influence of strong excitement, from the fears entertained of Catholic intrigue—when Andrew Melville had just succeeded in levelling with the dust the corrupt

Episcopacy which the Regents had introduced—when Esmé Stewart had already acquired his fatal influence, and the father of Charles I., at fourteen years of age, had given indications of the course which his son, in maturer life, and after ample warning, was then pursuing,—the General Assembly had drawn up, as a means of encouraging the Church amid the suspected dangers of Jesuitical design, a bond or COVENANT, in which the subscribers bound themselves to the defence of the Reformed religion, in doctrine and discipline, as then established; and this Covenant had received the signature of the Sovereign himself. Policy and enthusiasm alike suggested the repetition of an expedient so calculated to strengthen and unite the supplicants. Religious fervour added its powerful aid, and the struggles of a people for civil and religious liberty were cheered on under the more exciting aspect of a conflict in the cause of God and of His Church. In a few days all difficulties had been overcome—all scruples removed, and the Covenant of 1581 made applicable to 1638, by the addition of a legal recapitulation, drawn up by the hand of the lawyer, Johnston, and of a religious exhortation, framed by Henderson.

It was on the 22nd of February that the King's Proclamation had been promulgated in Edinburgh; it was on the 28th of the same month,—only six days after—that the five leading Commissioners entered the Grey Friars' Church at Edinburgh—filled, church and churchyard, by multitudes awaiting their arrival—bearing in their hands a great parchment roll.

I shall not here attempt the description of a scene of which so many pictures have been already given, inspired by no small portion of the same excited enthusiasm which swayed the immense multitude who signed the Covenant. It were to be wished, indeed, that the transactions of that eventful day had been less frequently narrated in language and in a tone so little adapted to the taste or to the understanding of less agitated times, and consequently so little capable of conveying to those to whom hereditary associations do not supply the key, an idea of anything but the more exaggerated features. Both as to characters and events, this remark applies. In the leaders by whom the Covenant was prepared, it is certain there was united with a state of mind which must appear to us due only to a fevered state of religious sentiment, a most remarkable amount of calmness, of discernment, and of knowledge of mankind. We must not suffer ourselves to be blinded to what was sound and true, deserving our fullest sympathy, in the men or in their measures, by the extravagance of language which characterised the time, and much of which is still unfortunately retained in many Presbyterian histories of the Covenant.

If nothing of the career of Cromwell had been preserved to us but the nonsense and the jargon of his speeches or his prayers, how false must have been our estimate of that extraordinary man—how little could we have conceived of those vast abilities, both for military and for State affairs, which distinguished the great Protector—of the keen discernment, of the

decision, of the tact, of the ability to command—in short, of all the varied powers of his diseased but gifted mind ! Contrasts similar in kind, though certainly not equal in degree, are of continual recurrence in the transactions to which we are now referring. We should have a false idea indeed of the momentous consequence of the principles asserted by the Covenant—and asserted not indirectly, or by implication merely, but kept distinctly in view, and stated with intelligence and power by those who supported it,—were we to confine our attention solely to the extraordinary religious form which their ideas and language took. It is not surprising that many should have been deceived by this into most erroneous impressions. The ideas which are widely prevalent, especially amongst Englishmen, of the Covenant and of the Covenanters, are natural enough. When we read the proceedings of the 28th of February, 1638—of the solemn fasts by which it was preceded and prepared for—of the opening by prayer from Henderson—of the emotions which swayed the vast assemblage—of the pauses of awful silence—of the hands lifted up to heaven—of the solemn vows—of the opening of veins to sign with blood—of the postscripts “until death ;”—and when we farther read the language used to characterise this extraordinary scene, by one whose name is so peculiarly identified with this passage of Scotland’s history—when we read of Alexander Henderson describing it as “the day of the Lord’s power, wherein His people offered themselves in multitudes as the dew-drops of the morning”—as “that great day of Israel wherein the arm

of the Lord was revealed,—when the princes of the people assembled themselves together to swear allegiance to the King of kings,"—we might well imagine, both of the leaders and the led, that they were nothing more than frantic fanatics; and that their cause, if just at all, and their resistance, if in any way beneficial to after times, were so in a sense which reflects no honour upon them, and calls for no other acknowledgment from us than that which we owe to the torrent or the storm, whose violence has destroyed obstructions which the powers of intelligence could never have removed. This would indeed be a melancholy conclusion; but it is one not more melancholy than false. As regards the Covenant itself, it expressed the most respectful deference to the King and all the constituted authorities of law, combined with the most determined protest ever entered by a people against the lawless tyranny of its rulers. And in respect to Henderson—who may be selected as the representative of the many who supported him in his measures, and who probably sympathised with him in his language—we find in his whole course at this time, as well as afterwards, in the practical conduct of affairs, evidence of the coolest judgment,—of an accurate knowledge of the constitution which he was the chief instrument of restoring to his country,—of the most intelligent apprehension of the principles of settled liberty,—of the most logical accuracy and distinctness in the defence and statement of his principles—and, what some of my readers might, from the above quotation, have been disposed to doubt, of a willingness and

ability to express them with courtesy and moderation. In corroboration of this statement, I may refer to an interesting correspondence which took place some years afterwards between Henderson and Charles I. himself.

But I must now return to the outline of events, and follow the progress of the Covenant. In an incredibly short space of time it had penetrated to the remotest corners of the land, and was everywhere received and signed with the same enthusiasm. There could now at least be no mistake as to the hopelessness of overcoming the "supplicants" unless by an appeal to arms. It was a national vow, and taken almost by the universal people. Spottiswoode, with others of his order, fled to England, convinced at last, and exclaiming in dismay, that his labour of thirty years had been spent in vain. The Bishops were further harassed by disaffection among themselves. Three of their number solemnly renounced their mitres, and mingling with, were lost in the triumphant ranks of Presbytery. Again Charles had an opportunity of retracing in Scotland his fatal steps. Again, and now more decidedly than ever, his Council reported that concessions must be made. Those who had hitherto supported him amongst the Scottish nobles, announced that they must decline to draw the sword of civil war in support of the Liturgy and Canons. A legal opinion was returned, that the supplicants had not transgressed the law; and the Presbyterian Commissioners now completed the moral strength of their cause, by demanding, as that which they most desired, a free Parliament, and a

free Assembly. No demand could be so unquestionably just—none could place on so firm a footing of legality the resistance of the people. None, therefore, could be more obnoxious to Charles I. He was found by his councillors as resolute as before. But his mind was more prepared than his means for a recourse to arms. He had already tried the efficacy of threats,—he saw it must soon come to violence,—and in the mean time he had resolved to try deceit. The Marquis of Hamilton was sent down to Scotland as Commissioner from the King, directly charged to deal in dishonesty and false professions for the purpose of gaining time; and the Sovereign himself performed the disgraceful and unworthy task of giving personal directions to the first noble of Scotland how to beguile his countrymen. Anything and everything seems to have been legitimate in the eyes of Charles I. against the “impertinent and damnable demands” of subjects who would not yield their rights to despotism. It was all in vain. Baffled at every step by the firmness and penetration of Henderson and the “Tables,” Hamilton had to repair in the beginning of July to London, a new conjuncture requiring new instructions. The demand for a Parliament and Assembly had now assumed a form which no duplicity could evade; and Hamilton, when he returned to Scotland, came charged with a promise of concession on this important point, upon certain conditions as to the powers and constitution of the proposed Assembly.

One of these conditions is a striking and instructive witness to the vast importance of that great

peculiarity in the polity of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, to which, in the earlier part of this Essay, I endeavoured to direct the special attention of my readers. I trust they have not forgotten the Institution of the Eldership—that link between the clergy and the laity which united them in the performance of common duties, and the exercise of common powers—which repudiated, not by accident, but on principle, the exclusive and superstitious claims of Priesthood—which gave an intelligible meaning, a real significance, to that much misused phrase “The Church,” and in Scotland had placed its Assemblies in a position of such commanding power. It required no great penetration on the part of Charles to see that to summon an Assembly constituted on such a plan would be to abandon his schemes at once; and accordingly the first condition of the Commissioner was the exclusion of the laity in the election of its members. It is not less instructive, that there was then a party amongst the Covenanted clergy, on whom the spirit of an order had so made its insidious advance; who were so little aware of the profounder principles on which the first Reformers of Scotland had based their system, and who were so blind to the obvious interests of the cause in which they were engaged, as to be not only willing to accede to, but anxious to secure, this disfranchisement of the great body of the Church. It seems to have been chiefly due to the influence of the same remarkable man of whom we have so often spoken, and whose knowledge and discernment were shown on this occasion to be equal

to his enthusiasm, that the Covenant was saved—not merely from the immediate danger of division and consequent defeat, but—from the far greater peril of being dissociated from the cause of civil liberty, and from those all-important principles on the nature and constitution of the Christian Church, which ought ever to attach to it the sympathy of after times.

But the opinions and party of Henderson prevailed ; the “ Tables ” rejected the conditions of the King, and declared that the Parliament and Assembly for which they sought must be entirely free, and constituted according to ancient usage and ancient laws. And not only so, but the Commissioner was startled and perplexed by a still bolder intimation. The statutes of 1592 had declared the right of the Presbyterian Church to hold its annual Assemblies to be wholly independent of a summons from the Crown. It was announced to Hamilton that the Covenanters were prepared, if the King still refused to give the royal consent, to assert and exercise this principle of the law. The Commissioner repaired in haste to London. It was now near the end of August, and before he returned to Scotland it was the middle of September. Concession could no longer be deferred. One only attempt was made to lessen the danger apprehended from the Assembly, which it was now impossible to prevent. The King resolved to try the effect of a counter-Covenant. He adopted the ancient form—the Covenant of 1581—and thus, whilst appearing to engage himself in defence of Presbytery, as those who signed that Covenant had originally done,

he avoided any definite application of those engagements to the circumstances of the time, and left himself free to assert in future, that the *existing system*, to which that Covenant had bound him, was no other than the Episcopal system which had been subsequently introduced. This stratagem entirely failed, whilst the immediate concessions he found it necessary to make, left the Covenanters virtually in full possession of the field. An Assembly was summoned to meet at Glasgow on the 21st of November; a Parliament on the 15th of May (1639). The Service Book, Book of Canons, and Court of High Commission were discharged by Royal proclamation, and finally the Bishops were left subject to the Assembly's discipline.

During the two months which elapsed between this announcement, and the meeting of the General Assembly, both parties made desperate exertions to secure a favourable issue. The King, however, was fully aware of the inevitable result; and had long before begun active preparations for that last resort to which he would willingly have applied at once, had he been in a state to do so. The Covenanters of course were aware of this, and did not neglect similar precautions. Scottish officers returned from the shores of Sweden, armed with the military experience of the soldiers of Gustavus Adolphus; and on the appointed day when an assembled people were to meet the representative of their Sovereign, there was heard,—amidst the language of compliment and form,—the clash of secret armour, and the murmurs of mutual suspicion. Yet

all proceeded with due pomp and order. On the 21st of November, 1638, the magnificent cathedral of St. Mungo, in the ancient see of Glasgow, was seen bending its lofty aisles over the assembled representatives of a people, whose prevailing sentiment was dread and horror of that Church and worship, to which their fathers had, centuries before, consecrated the venerable pile. Alexander Henderson, the minister of Leuchars, occupied the chair which in former times might have been more appropriately filled by the successors of the saint.

I shall not detail the contests, on points of form and order of procedure, which Hamilton maintained to ward off the inevitable vote which was to reassert, after so long an interval, the supreme authority of the General Assembly over all the officers of the Church. After every possible delay had been interposed,—when the Bishops had sent in a paper declining the jurisdiction of the court,—when a reply had been framed in a committee of the Assembly,—when Henderson, after a lengthened argument which called forth the approval of the Commissioner as one which became a Christian and a subject, had demanded leave to put the question whether the Assembly deemed itself competent to judge the Bishops—when every resource of delay had been exhausted, and it was now evident that the time had come when he must either acquiesce, or openly intimate the intention of the King to carry his appeal beyond the tribunals of the constitution,—Hamilton took the fatal step of retiring from the Assembly, and declaring it dissolved by the authority of the Crown.

With one hand already on the sword, Covenanters were in no disposition to yield consent to so arbitrary and unconstitutional an act, or to relinquish that independent right which the Statutes of 1592 had acknowledged, and which was felt to rest on far higher authority than these. The Assembly proceeded on its course, and even at this dangerous crisis gained new and important adherents to its cause. The Earl of Argyll, who had hitherto, with some others, refrained from joining the Covenant, and endeavoured to stand between the people and the King, remained behind when the Commissioner left the cathedral. Finally the Bishops were deposed—the platform of the Presbyterian Church was entirely relaid—the fabric of Knox and Melville rose again fresh under the hands of Henderson; the proceedings of the Assembly were wound up with his usual ability, and his usual zeal; he spoke with respect, almost with affection, of the King; an Assembly was appointed for the ensuing year; and, at the last, he announced in characteristic language that they had now cast down the walls of Jericho, and that he who attempted to rebuild them must beware of the curse of Hiel the Bethelite!

Such is the fourth great epoch in the History of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, which had then still to pass through two remaining periods—periods, more than any which preceded them, of bitter contest, and of still more bitter suffering, ere it reached the resting-place of 1688. I have followed the stream, and endeavoured to give an idea of the current of events, until, at the point at which we are

now arrived, it suddenly becomes a rapid, and then bursts in the broken waters of revolutionary strife. Yet here, too, the course of Scottish Presbytery continues well defined, and not less instructive than before. It is, indeed, a wild course,—one marked by some strong delusions, and so covered with the tall weeds of passion as to conceal sometimes the many noble truths which were borne along it. Nevertheless, it is a course flashing with stormy lights, which, if they show its own excesses, cast a still broader glare on the follies and the crimes of those to whom it was opposed.

CHAPTER VI.

RETROSPECT ON THE PRINCIPLES DEVELOPED DURING
THE PRECEDING PERIODS.

I MUST stop for a moment here, and revert to a subject which has in some measure been left behind, but which is of deeper importance than the mere order of events. Unless viewed in connection with the previous rise and course of parties, the civil wars of Britain may seem a mere chaos of individual vice and passion. But there are clues to this history by which we may unravel its confusions, and trace every movement to its source. And there are invaluable lessons to be read from those characters of blood and fire. We must never forget that the antagonist tendencies which came into collision then, are, many, if not all of them, permanent in human character. Not only *may* they all appear at any moment amongst ourselves; but some of them, and these the most prominent of all, are now visibly, actively at work. Especially do we see surviving the same tendencies of religious and ecclesiastical opinion which had so principal a share in producing and maintaining the civil wars. There are at this moment, very near us, and in no dormant state, opinions which, under a slight change of outward circumstances, might seek expression in another Covenant. And there are

opinions too, equally full of life, which, with even smaller change, might re-appear as those against which the Covenant was sworn. There are men whom it is not difficult to conceive acting the part of another HENDERSON. There would be cause for alarm if its tried result, or the clear iniquity of his course, were our only safeguard against another LAUD. The same vices of opinion may perhaps be never again embodied in the same outward form ; but there is abundant evidence that they still exist, and animate the same parties at the present day. Historians have long enough discussed idle and empty questions as to who began the wars, and on whom the responsibility of that beginning rests. And we know that the men of those days, themselves,—especially those connected with Scottish Presbytery,—argued with themselves painfully on a subject, on which they were led to a decision, however much they may have been deceived, neither by the suggestions of conscience, nor by the rules of logic ; but by the stern necessities of circumstance and of passion. With the preconceived tendencies of the two parties, their hostility could end only as it did. It is a more interesting question, therefore, to inquire how and whence those tendencies arose ; and in what consisted that character of precipitation and virulence which caused so much suffering and crime.

The most prominent characteristic of the time of the civil wars, and of that which immediately preceded them, was its fanaticism. Yet how difficult it is to define or even to illustrate the meaning of this word ! That which would appear an extreme instance

of it to some, seems an example only of devotion, or of noble witnessing in the cause of truth, to others. The Episcopalian "Churchman" will see fanaticism in the conduct of Covenanters; whilst the Presbyterian will see it with equal readiness in the daring pretensions of Prelatic Priesthood; but neither the one nor the other will probably be willing to admit the charge against the party with which his own sympathies are connected. In the sense in which I understand fanaticism, it appears in the conduct and in the language of BOTH. It may be well, therefore, to define, as nearly as possible, what that sense is. When I say, then, that fanaticism is a prominent characteristic of the time of the civil wars, I mean that in almost all the parties of that time,—in the prince, in the priest, and in the people,—there was fatal, intoxicated indulgence in that passion which leads men to claim presumptuously the direct sanction of God to their own cause, principles, and conduct. This is an attempt which frequently begins in a keen perception and defence of something really good and true. Not unfrequently also it arises from bad passions seeking to hide, by sanctifying, themselves. Between these two extremes there is every degree in which truth may be mixed with error and passion. The fanaticism of some parties rests on high and noble truths—laws of natural justice, or some deep spiritual verity, which covers and embraces a multitude of these. That of other parties may have no better foundation than some mere semblance, or partial truth, wrested from its proper place, and covered with a monstrous superstructure of ambition,

arrogance, and pride. In causes of such diverse character and value, does the fanaticism of men claim the support and sanction of the Will of God ! But with all human parties who advance such claims in behalf of their own course—with the best as well as with the worst,—with those who have started from the broadest, as well as with those who have done so from the narrowest foundation of truth—there is always one result. Such claims always end (as how should they not ?) in the most repulsive identification of sacred truths with the most petty human notions, or the most mischievous human passions.

I have already traced the process by which the ideas and language of Presbytery had become excited and extreme, in reference to one very important subject—the absolute separation between ecclesiastical and civil power, and the *Jure Divino* authority of the former. I have also traced how this idea came to be identified with the whole liberties and principles of the Presbyterian Church, and how anxiously its members were ransacking Scripture, in order to secure there some basis on which this idea might be more firmly planted, in a dogmatic form. I have alluded, farther, to the fact of scriptural texts having been produced with equal facility in support of exactly opposite ideas, when these had been called forth by opposite external circumstances. Lastly, I referred to the extremely infelicitous choice frequently made of scriptural quotations—a result which will not surprise those who hold that the idea referred to as then conceived and expressed by Presbytery, is one which has no foundation at all in

abstract truth, or on any expression of the Divine Will. But the extreme irrelevancy of many of the quotations is, certainly, a very instructive fact—one which I can only now corroborate by referring my readers to the documents of that time ;—and, strange to say, to certain documents of the present time also, —especially to the “ Constitutional Catechism ” of the Free Church. Meanwhile, I shall express my firm conviction that of the many texts on which it has been attempted to give a doctrinal rank to the idea referred to, a very large portion are so wholly irrelevant that probably few modern theologians (always excepting a Free Churchman) could trace any connection whatever between the text and the interpretation ; whilst that with the remaining number, this connection depends entirely on the preconceived convictions of the interpreter, and, apart from these, is very attenuated indeed.

And now I have only to remind the reader that the advance of Presbytery in this direction is an advance towards that which I have defined as my understanding of fanaticism. In proportion as it came to identify—not its abstract principles alone, but—its whole cause, its conduct, and even its particular forms of organic life, with expressions of Divine, doctrinal truth, it gave itself up a prey to that passion in which all fanaticism consists. In this tendency it was finally determined by collision with the counter-fanaticism of English Prelacy. And it is characteristic of the relative positions occupied by these two parties in Scotland, that whilst the fanaticism of Presbytery impaired its virtues, and seriously obscured

the value of its principles, that of Prelacy was the first element of respectability it ever possessed. I mean that religious bigotry and passion was the only incitement which could even excuse the course of Prelacy in Scotland; and before that bigotry was communicated to it from English Episcopacy, there was no feature in its character to redeem its corruption or its violence—to compensate for the obstruction it opposed to the religious, social, and political advancement of the Scottish people.

But I propose now to look at the history of these two fanaticisms a little nearer.

It is clear that the first Scotch reformers were strongly under the influence of a disposition, universal in their day, and perhaps inseparable from their position, to identify too much their own opinions, on every question, with dogmas of religious truth. They had it in common with that universal mind of Reformed Europe in which religion was the one subject of engrossing interest. They acted under it to some extent in constructing the system of their Church. They thought such a system could be found in Scripture, and what they found in Scripture they conceived to be more or less of perpetual obligation. The documents of the time abound in evidence of their firm conviction that the organisation of the Church of Knox was that also of the Church of the Apostles. Yet, practically, they showed in many things their belief that difference of outward circumstances might demand a change in outward form. Thus they appointed Superintendents, accompanying the institution of the office with a special explanation

of the considerations which “moved them *at that time* to make difference among ministers.” We know indeed that the principle of parity among ministers, which was the basis of their scheme, was in their estimation the most perfect copy of the most perfect pattern. We know this from what they said, and what they did; we should have known it, if it had stood alone, from the above single sentence. But their minds were on this point under the influence of no narrow or superstitious feeling. Not only had they no objection to hold nearest communion with their fellow Protestants under other forms of polity, but they seem to have made no effort, and entertained but little wish, to have such forms altered and fashioned like their own. It is not generally known, I think, to what extent the liberality of their opinions went on those very points, in regard to which Scottish Presbytery was afterwards goaded to the fiercest prejudice, by the fanatic bigotry of Prelatic “Churchmen.”

On this point I can adduce a testimony which indeed is not required, but which is at least specially applicable for my present purpose. It is that of the “Spottiswoode Society,” — the testimony of Bishop Sage. I must explain how it is that the Bishop is induced to give it. He gives it, strange as it may appear, for a party purpose. Bigotry is often very blind, and forges lethal weapons against itself. So it is in this case. It is not enough for the claims of that Communion to which Bishop Sage and his editors belong, that it, and it alone, should be “The Church” in Scotland; they will have it also that it is

the Church of Scotland: not only is it the Church Apostolic, but it is likewise the Church National: not only is Presbytery a *wrong* thing, but it is a *schismatic* thing,—it is,—in the splenetic jargon of the sect, which I have already quoted,—“that form of schism established in Scotland.” Bishop Sage wrote after the Revolution. He wrote when smarting under the losses which the final triumph of Presbytery inflicted on him and his associates—losses which, with much aggravated cruelty, his own party had so often inflicted on others, and which, with retributive justice, were then being turned back upon themselves. The Presbytery with which he had to deal was certainly an embittered spirit—embittered by years of suffering from unlawful and unjust oppression. Bishop Sage could see *its* bigotry—its fanaticism. He looked back—but he could not perceive the same in the days of the first Scotch Reformers. It was easy to see the difference; if he had looked to his own opinions, and the history of his own party, he would have found the cause; but not seeing this, he turned the contrast to a strange account. He had before him the same ambition to be national, which his party still exhibits. He conceived the idea, therefore, of appealing from the disciples of Henderson, to the immediate followers of Knox; and bravely attacked the truth of that memorable declaration, with which the Parliament of Scotland closed those wretched years of contest—that Prelacy was, and had been, a great and insupportable grievance and trouble to that nation ever since the Reformation, and therefore ought to be abolished. I say the

Bishop attacked it bravely; for, in truth, it was a brave thing to do. Nevertheless, he succeeds in some sort. He proves successfully that the wording of the "Article" is not literally correct. He proves, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that during, and for several years after the Reformation,—until Prelacy became the fanatic enemy of Presbytery—the latter bore towards it no hostility—no narrow prejudice—even no strong objection.

Thanks to the Bishop for having corroborated so significant a fact. Thanks to him when he reminds us how John Knox himself exercised for a considerable time the functions of his ministry in the Episcopal, and at that time semi-Papal, Church in England, not only without any strong objection, but without ever entering any protest whatever against this form of government in itself;—how, when he was called before the Privy Council, and was specially invited to explain his reasons for refusing the preferments which were offered to him by Edward VI., he enumerated objections in which no mention whatever is made of Episcopacy;—how in the various addresses he published at different times to the Church of England, for the purpose of exhorting them to proceed in the work of Reformation, he not only never dwells on this point as one in which change was essential; but in one of these addresses even indicates that the subdivision of the Bishopricks—not the abolition of them—was the course he would himself advise;—how, in short, to use the words of Bishop Sage, "not one among the first Scotch Reformers, either

directly or indirectly, asserted the *divine and unalterable right* of Parity."

I have followed the Bishop with much interest and some amusement through many pages in which, with many fierce sallies against the Presbyterian opinions of his own day, he accumulates proof on proof that in the earlier days of Scottish Presbytery it was by no means (like himself and his opponents equally) fanatic on forms of government, or on forms of worship; that it communicated freely with the English Church, and that members of the English Church communicated as freely with it: that it used Forms of Prayer, and very frequently the English Liturgy itself. All this may be read with interest, not as possessing novelty, but as coming from such a source. It is impossible not to deplore deeply that the vicious course and principles of Prelacy in Scotland should subsequently have made such foul havoc in this wise and Christian feeling.

It was during the Regencies, as we have seen, about 1571-2, that a corrupt species of Prelacy was first intruded on the Presbyterian Church. Bigotry cannot, certainly, be charged against the promoters of that system. It did not profess to rest on any religious principle; nor did its constitution agree with any known theory of *Jus Divinum*. But its influence in rousing those passions of which it was incapable itself, must not be overlooked. Although Scottish Prelacy, at this stage of its existence, was devoid of any principle, Scottish Presbytery was not. It was founded on passionate conviction; and every opposition it encountered, springing from motives less

earnest than its own, tended to strengthen that conviction, and give to all its principles additional value in its sight. If in the main those principles were great and true positively, every scrap of them appeared great and true by contrast. In tracing, then, the rise of that contempt and hatred against Prelacy, which did not abate in Scotland until the final banishment of the name, we must never forget this beginning,—the odious circumstances of its early life. It is easy to explain, and it is impossible to regret the change which arose in the mind of Presbytery. We may regret, indeed, the existence of the cause from which the change arose, but not the change itself. That it was ultimately excessive as regards the forms in which it was expressed, is a truth which few now are likely to deny. But that it was *not* excessive as regards the magnitude of the evil and the danger it had to combat, and was destined in its own country to subdue, is a proposition of which I am, if possible, still more fully satisfied. For the consequences it involved,—for the long and bitter contests it occasioned,—Presbytery is not the party to be held responsible. We have seen from undoubted evidence how free from bigotry and exaggeration its principles were at first: and from the same hostile witness, we can trace how late and long they continued still to be so. Bishop Sage, in pursuit of the same line of argument I have above explained, refers to the assent given in 1571-2 to a species of Episcopacy, as a further proof of the readiness of Presbytery at that time to depart from the principles of absolute parity. His modern editor, with an audacity of quibble

which I have never seen equalled, except in other writings of the same school,* goes so far as to speak of that system as emanating from the "Episcopal opinions" of the Scottish clergy. The Bishop's argument, however, unlike the assertion of his editor, has some foundation. But it is hardly necessary to say, that as the assent given to a corrupt Episcopacy in 1571-2 was extracted under circumstances of moral, if not of physical compulsion, inasmuch as it was avowedly submitted to only as an escape from greater dangers to the position and property of the Church,—and as, further, the system to which that assent was given was only nominally Episcopal, and placed the titular (or "tulchan") under the absolute control of Presbytery,—it cannot be cited as establishing anything more than this:—that those who gave the assent, however reluctantly, cannot have held the dogma that the forms of Presbytery are absolutely sacred, or that any departure from them under the influence of external power, was a direct violation of the law of God.

But immediately subsequent to this period those sterner principles arose, to which, as expressed in the Second Book of Discipline, and as represented by the unflinching Andrew Melville, the Bishop and his party refer, in bitterness of spirit, as the "Second Model." In this there are none of those faint traces of imparity which, as seen in Superintendents and Tulchans, constitute in the eyes of "Churchmen" a sort of redeeming trait in the earlier stage of Scottish

* See note E.

Presbytery. Thenceforward Presbytery nailed its colours to the mast, and would admit of no surrender. The first period during which it had any personal dealings with Episcopacy, was the last during which it could even tolerate the name. The Prelacy of the Regents is, historically speaking, the same party with the more genuine Episcopacy of Charles I. The one ran into the other without any visible alteration to mark the change. And thus not only have the antipathies of Presbytery since regarded them as the same, but also the sympathies of Prelacy. To this hour the Presbyterian points with just opprobrium to the origin of Episcopacy in Scotland; and to this hour, also, the "Churchman" retains a sort of shamefaced regard for this bastard generation in his spiritual pedigree. The Prelacy of that time, though not Episcopal, because not gifted with, and not desirous of "Apostolical succession," was, at least, Anti-Presbyterian so far as it was allowed to go. It is the best, therefore, and the only representative then existing of the "Churchman's" party. This may account for the fact that the writer above referred to,—the modern editor of Bishop Sage's work,—attempts to ascribe to that system, defective as it was, some practically good effects in the government of the Church. These, he thinks, failed of being wholly perfect only on account of that fatal vacuity of "life divine" which in fact reduces the Bishops of the Regency to simple laymen. And when the thoughts of the editor recur to this fact, he laments it with much eloquence and feeling. Having applauded the "Tulchan" Episcopacy so far

as it suits his purpose, he kindles into positive indignation against it when he reflects on its ignorance of, and indifference to, the "unbroken chain of Apostolical succession." It was a "scheme" after all, a "mere scheme," "devised by the ministers for their own personal convenience." It had the outward form of Episcopacy, "but it wanted the Life Divine;" it was "as the chiselled marble as compared with the living man. It bore a striking resemblance; but there was wanting the principle of vitality which fills the form with warmth, and lights up every feature with vivacity!"

Yet so potent is the charm of Episcopacy in the eyes of this member of the "Spottiswoode," that its mere outward form,—an empty imitation of it,—figures stuck up with the Apostolical insignia, mitres, crosier, and rochets,—did infinite service to the Church and State. Such is the happy illusion of Bishop Sage's editor. I presume he must be right, and the Parliament of Scotland must be wrong. The latter, certainly, only two years after the setting up of these Episcopal effigies, entered on its votes that sundry inconveniences had arisen, and were likely to arise, from the want of a policy by which the Church might be governed in "decent and comely order." And if any credence can be given to documents which, for my own part, I consider most decisive, this vote of the Parliament was a most gentle expression for the grossest system of corruption which ever existed in a Reformed Church; for a hierarchy, without the merit of bigotry, and with the vices of ambition and venality; for a system, in

short, founded on corruption,—productive of anarchy and confusion,—and opposed to that “Presbyterian model” to which, as Mr. Tytler confesses, “the ministers of the Church, the great body of the burghers, and the middle and lower classes of the people, were zealously attached.”

But I shall now leave this Bishop and his editor, and trouble the reader no more concerning them. He has been applied to the only use which can be derived from his writings. He proves with great success the absence of fanaticism on forms of government in the elder Presbyterian Church of Scotland. He proves that her Assemblies in 1572, and for some subsequent years, could hold in abeyance their own opinions, “in consideration,” as themselves expressed it, “of the times;”—that they were tied by no groundless notions of *Jus Divinum*; and, consequently, I think, that they were infinitely wiser men—perhaps than Andrew Melville,—certainly than Bishop Sage.

It would have been strange, however, as we have seen, if the course of Prelacy in Scotland had not soon developed some seeds of more excited feeling which had been sown at the very first in the ground of Presbytery. It did so, and it could not fail to do so. It did so, not merely because Presbytery, more thoroughly reduced to system under the auspices of Andrew Melville, had become more and more a part of the positive opinions of the people; but also because the Prelacy they had to deal with, was destitute of anything respectable in itself, and was always connected with avarice, ambition, and tyranny in the government.

There had not been wanting in the language of the first Reformers, applications of Scripture, which, when used with less intelligence, and under the influence of more direct excitement, might feed fanatic spirit. Every struggle in their own country—every struggle beyond it—more or less concerned religion. Presbyterians, therefore, were predisposed, by every influence of the past and of the present, to a fevered state of religious sentiment,—to magnify the positive value of their institutions, apart from their relation to time and circumstance,—to exaggerate sound general principles into abstract truths,—to identify rights with doctrines.

Until a comparatively late period, as we have seen, those latent tendencies did not take full effect ; but in the second great struggle of Presbytery with the Court and Prelacy—that which began subsequent to 1592, under the direction of James VI.—unequivocal symptoms appeared of a coming storm of mind. The language of the pulpit,—under the combined influence of more positive attachment to the popular system, of increasing hatred to the alternate violence and deceit which marked the course of Prelacy, and of suspicion of Popish intrigue,—became more fanatic. Another most powerful cause had contributed to this effect. So long as the common separation from Rome, and the common danger from the returning tide of its aggressive power, were uppermost in the minds of Protestants, there was less disposition to notice their own internal differences. Nonconformists had, indeed, soon felt a foretaste of hatred among brethren ; and the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland had

early addressed a letter in their behalf, to "their brethren, the Bishops of England." But for many years the two Churches, though so different in their origin, their nature, and the ideas to which they had given birth, had continued on friendly terms. This, however, could not long survive. The lines were not only not parallel, but rapidly divergent. The one had been born into the world instinct with ideas of popular right, and had soon advanced to a vigorous growth in the principles of constitutional liberty. The other had grown out of prerogative, and tended more and more to support, in every enterprise, the authority of the Crown. The one had been led by the anarchical disturbances to which a corrupt Prelacy had subjected it, to base itself more positively on appeals to Scripture. The other had been led, by a similar influence from Nonconformity, to claim more distinctly the paramount authority of Apostolic institution.

The change, indeed, which, under this influence, had passed on the character of the English Church, was far greater than that which took place in Scotland. The Church of Bancroft and of Laud was more widely separate from the Church of Cranmer, than was the Church of Henderson from that of Knox. The transition we encounter in temper, in feeling, and opinion, in passing from the earlier times of Elizabeth to those of the succeeding Stewarts, is one of the saddest and most chilling kind. The most distinguished Anglican refugees in the time of Mary had found shelter and protection from the ministers of Switzerland. They considered themselves as disciples of a common faith,

—aye, as members of the same Reformed Church. And the principles which arose amidst the genial feelings of personal intercourse were not abandoned when that intercourse had ceased. When the refugees returned to their own country, and became principal dignitaries in the English Church, they continued to consult, with affection and respect, the judgment of their friends abroad. At one with them, on all which they mutually considered as essential, and to a great degree on matters of inferior importance, the English Bishops rather addressed themselves to excuse, than to defend, the difference which accident had established between the Anglican and Helvetian Reform.* And when those contests had begun which were destined to convulse the whole State and Church of England, both they and their opponents referred with equal anxiety to the authority of Swiss divines. A few years later, and we meet with a melancholy change indeed. The Prelates of England are no longer the brethren and the friends of the Presbyters of Zurich. A John-Bull-Theology had arisen which rejoiced, not only in defending the peculiarities of the Anglican Reformation,—for this might have been reasonable enough,—but in extolling them as the most essential criterions of the Christian Church. Everything that happened

* There is no use in multiplying quotations to prove a statement, the truth of which will be recognised by all who have attended to the writings of English Churchmen in the earlier years of the Elizabethan reign. The tone of them throughout confirms the truth of the assurance given to Gualter by Bishop Pilkington, in a letter dated July 20th, 1573—"We endure many things against our inclinations, and groan under them, which, if we wished ever so much, no censure can remove."

or was done in England, most different from that which happened or was done in other Churches of the Reformed, was selected as the idol of a narrow and vulgar worship.* An under-current had set in, drifting men from the anchors of the Reformation,—especially the men in power. The first symptom of its force appeared in the cry of the Divine right of Bishops. Hatred of the Puritans at home,—estrangement from Protestants abroad,—these were at once the cause and the effect of tendencies from which the English Church has never since been wholly free,† and which had well nigh again established in our island the worst evils of Romish principle.‡

Such was the direction which one of the fanaticisms of England took, acting, as all true fanaticisms must do, on the strength of some scraps of truth, and under the impulse of many passions. To meet this, a counter-fanaticism was required; fortified by higher truths; and armed by stronger passions.

* The same change had taken place as regarded the English forms of Church government, which Bishop Jewel describes to have taken place as regarded the forms of worship. “The scenic apparatus of divine worship is now under agitation; and those very things which you and I have so often laughed at are now seriously and solemnly entertained by certain persons, as if the Christian religion could not exist without something tawdry.”—*Bishop Jewel to Peter Martyr*, 1559.

† “The Church is sound in other respects, except that she is yet struggling with that old disease under which she has laboured even from her infancy: for she will not entirely recover from Popery before the last coming of that great physician, Jesus Christ.”—*Bishop Horn to Gualter*, August 10, 1576. *Zurich Letters*, cxxix., p. 320.

‡ See note F.

Such was the fanaticism of the Puritans, and—closely allied to it,—that of Presbytery. Purer logic and calmer temper would have been comparatively powerless against such an enemy. The lucid reasoning of Chillingworth would have never saved us from the fierce dogmatism of Laud. Cromwell's heavy sword, wielded by Cromwell's daring faith—this was the remedy which the case required. And for this remedy it was the lot of Scottish Presbytery to prepare the way. It had the best opportunity and the best right to begin the war. The rational and friendly sympathy which subsisted so long as purer principles prevailed in England, broke down, of course, before the insolent pretensions of the later school. Presbytery appeared, and really was, to the priests of England, a Puritanism more dangerous than their own, because resting on a national basis, having an organised, active government, and holding the position of an independent Church. They naturally attacked it fiercely. As naturally the English Puritans looked for its support. Thus common sympathies were obscured; hostile prejudices arose. The Prelates of Scotland, though not Bishops, were the only representatives of the name in that country; they were still more entirely than their more genuine brethren of the South, the creatures of prerogative. "No estate," says Archbishop Gladstones to James VI. in a letter quoted by M'Crie, "may say we are your Majesty's creatures, as we may say." This honourable "Estate" was therefore soon succoured by English sympathy; and afterwards the Nonconformists were as actively cheered

on from Scotland. A fierce attack from Bancroft, in the year 1588, is mentioned as the first overt act of hostility which startled the Presbytery of Scotland with warning of an enemy, with which it was soon to engage, hand to hand, in mutually fatal conflict.

Such were the hostile tendencies fully developed, such the hostile alliances fully formed, when political circumstances united these Churches, as we have seen, under a common Sovereign, and, in doing so, subjected the one to the tyrannical dominion of the other. The opportunity was not suffered to be lost. Three or four years before the accession to the English throne, James, it will be remembered, had begun his scheme for the overthrow of Presbytery and the re-introduction of his "creature" Bishops. But when he acquired that new power, he had taken only a few initiatory steps. Now, however, genuine "Churchmen," such as his own heart could wish, were round him,—men who would flatter his pedantry, encourage his ambition, and sanctify his claims to despotism. But this was not all the English Bishops did, nor the most, for the Scottish Prelacy—they not only helped to restore it to existence, but they gave it, for the first time, an "inner life." They made the stuffed figures, with the crosiers and the rochets, living Bishops. They converted the "chiselled marble" into "living man." Yet, strange to say, they did not do this immediately. From some cause or other, there was a long delay. Perhaps it was that Gladstones, Spottiswoode, and the other Scottish Prelates, had been so long accustomed to consider

themselves veritable Bishops,—to argue as such,—to vote as such,—to minister as such,—that they could not bring themselves to allow that they wanted anything to complete their title. Perhaps it was that James, who had acted so often, when it suited him, in the character of a zealous Presbyterian, could not be sooner taught the true theory of the *Jus Divinum*, beyond what was enough to magnify sufficiently his own prerogative. I know not; but it was not until the year 1610 that the three Scottish Prelates were sent off to London, where they received Episcopal consecration from the hands of the Bishops of London, Bath, and Ely. One of these three was John Spottiswoode, who had already been Bishop after the fashion of his own country for seven years; another had been such for four years; the third for the same period; whilst a fourth,—Gladstones himself, then Archbishop of St. Andrews,—who submitted to the same ceremony, in the same year, had sat on the Episcopal Bench of Scotland for ten years.

It is difficult to say what may have been the hidden effect of this consecration. Those Prelates, doubtless, must have been conscious of so great a change as that of being converted from “chiselled marble” into “living men.” And perhaps, like their modern champions, the members of the “Spottiswoode,” they may have felt it an *ex post facto* vindication of their previous course. Perhaps they felt themselves justified, at last, for having first practised deceit, and then instigated violence, against the system under which they had themselves received the ministry, and to which their countrymen were so

zealously attached, without having had before them, until then, the only principle which could furnish even an excuse. One thing, at least, is certain,—that there was no point in which Scottish Prelacy seems to have been affected for the better, in its outward dealings, by this newly communicated inner life. Its selfish ambition was not less strongly marked; its pride was even more offensive. It was no less eager to grasp to itself powers which were odious to its country. It was even more reckless in its attack on rights in which that country had the deepest interest. The very apologists of James and Charles are full of bitter complaints of the Scottish Bishops. Clarendon remarks on their “pride of heart;” he speaks of the want of breeding or of temper which appeared in the conduct of some; of the insolence and petulance of others; of the “craft” of the whole body. Burnet, too, testifies how haughty they became; how they “neglected their functions,” and “lost esteem with the people.” Spottiswoode himself, though a man of milder nature than many of his brethren,—of much more real knowledge of the elements he had to deal with,—and probably never a thorough bigot on the *Jus Divinum*,—had little in his personal character to redeem the odium attaching to his station and his former history.

I have already shown the consequences of this Prelacy—the outward results to which its inner life inevitably led. Violence to popular right,—to positive institution,—to religious belief,—in short, to every strongest current of opinion which had set in since the Reformation—had at last done its work, in

thoroughly distempering the spirit of the people. And now, too, that change in the character and language of Presbytery, on which I have dwelt before, appeared in its final and most aggravated degree. I have spoken of the efforts Presbytery had been making to clothe its principles in a dogmatic form—to gather up and condense them, as it were, under the assertion of some abstract truth. There remains now only to introduce to the notice of my readers, the particular truth which was chosen for this purpose, and which has descended, as a watchword, to the present day.

It was, that “Christ is the only Head of the Church.” Although the expression that Christ is the Head of the Church is one which occurs more than once in Scripture, this favourite assertion of Presbytery can hardly be regarded as the mere quotation of any particular text. It is, in fact, the expression of a truth so rudimentary and essential, that it may almost be regarded as a truism. It does not need any particular text to establish that Christ is the Head of the Christian Church. But it may require some explanation how this truth was conceived to embody and represent the claims of Presbytery. The connection of ideas is certainly not obvious—in fact, only to be explained by the connection of events. The history of a Church is no bad exponent of its dogmas. We have only to remember what it was that Presbytery had principally to defend, to see what it was that was very likely to become its *idée dominante*. Its theology had not been the object of attack. No emendation had been proposed of that “clear sum-

mary of Christian doctrine, grounded on the Word of God," which, on the shortest notice, the Reformers had presented, in 1560, to the Parliament of Scotland. It had not been its doctrine, but its liberty,—not the tenets of its divines, but the power of its Assemblies,—which had been continually exposed to hostility and attack. Yet on the liberty and power of those bodies depended the liberty and power of the Church to exercise the right of self-government. But this right was a natural right, and like all such, claimed first by instinct,—then defended on principle,—at last on doctrine. It was the same right which had been felt and acted upon by each individual mind, as it awoke to the errors of existing authority. It was the same right which had been obeyed by those who gathered round the first Reformers, to define the terms of their own belief, or to concert measures for the propagation of the truth. Still more strongly, then, must it have been felt by those Assemblies which represented the religion of the people, and of all orders in the State.

I have shown how soon it had become the doctrine as well as the practice of Presbytery, that the Church owned no authority superior to that of its own collective voice. Behind this principle Presbytery had entrenched itself against such claims of authority as the Romish Church acknowledged in its Priesthood—such Headship as it recognised in its High Priest,—the Pope. But it was equally applicable to negative that authority which in England had been transferred to the Sovereign, and which James VI. was attempting to assert in Scotland. Here, then, is the clue to

the language of Presbytery. Its object was to establish the full right of self-government, by means of denying the existence of any authority, *in the world*, superior to that of her own Assemblies. But *denials*—mere negations—never make good popular watchwords. Some form of positive assertion is always requisite, especially where religious feelings are to seek expression. This assertion, then, was chosen, that “Christ is the *only* King and Head of His Church.” But *how* did this express the principles referred to? The truth is, it did *not* express them at all; but it was conceived to do so, and therefore was as useful as if it did. The connection of ideas, however, can be traced. Since Christ was the “*only*” authority recognised, and since Christ was not on earth, it was taken for granted, as following, that no authority remained *in this world* entitled to interfere, in spiritual things, with that of the Church, speaking through its own representative Assemblies.

Such is the history, both in the order of time, and in the connection of ideas, of this celebrated formula of expression. It certainly expressed,—if not the principle it was conceived to express,—at least the high value set upon that principle by the Presbyterian Church. As involving an argument it is of no value, but as conveying a feeling it is full of meaning. Nor was that feeling destitute of a good foundation. It was the same which was breathed in the equally impetuous, but more logical language of Knox himself, when the courtiers of Mary had questioned the right of holding Assemblies without her permission—“Take from us the freedom of

Assembly, and take from us the Gospel." Used as an exponent of this feeling the formula to which I refer was not, I believe, of much earlier origin than the Second Book of Discipline; nor, I think, did it become current in the popular mouth until a somewhat later period.* It was, however, just such an adoption as was sure to be made by a great popular religious party. The sacredness of the names invoked, and the self-evident truth of the assertion made, served to represent,—however illogically they expressed,—both the religious importance, and the soundness of the principles involved in the claims of Presbytery. Thus, also, this formula served to concentrate the passions requisite to defend those claims. The counter-passions, which Presbytery had to meet, had been now sanctified by an assumption of religious principle. How better, then, could it conduct the fight than by throwing up similar entrenchments, and calling to its aid, as its enemy had done, notions of *Jus Divinum*? Such notions had been every day becoming more familiar. Everything in it and around it impelled it in this direction—one in which, certainly, its enthusiasm did rush to very impetuous conclusions. The only Head of the Church was its First Founder; its right of self-government was therefore derived from Him; its cause against usurping Heads was therefore His: in fighting for the Covenant it fought for Christ!

Thus, in this position, built up so naturally,—so plausibly,—so unsoundly, the fanaticism of Presbytery

* See note G.

was complete. In identifying the cause of the Covenant with that of the "Crown of Christ,"—His "Headship," with that of the General Assembly,—use is evidently made of a purely religious idea, quite irrelevant, for the purpose of sanctifying not merely the ecclesiastical principles of Presbytery, but the special measures adopted in their defence. To the majority of readers perhaps no proof is requisite of that which indeed is quite apparent—the extravagance and fanaticism of this language in itself. Yet as it is used in the present day as a legitimate and rational form of expression for conveying the same ideas, it may be well to examine it a little more closely.

I have already traced the meaning and intention given to the phrase to be the assertion of—a principle of the greatest value and importance—the right of the visible Church to the privilege of self-government; and this right it was supposed to represent by denying the existence of any individual, or of any body whether lay or spiritual, entitled to control the Church's own collective voice. But it is plain that of this principle the phrase in question is a most illogical expression. The assertion that Christ is the only King and Head of His Church is one which might have been, and would have been, admitted by the proudest occupant of St. Peter's chair. Nor need it have suggested any doubt to Henry VIII. as to the lawfulness of his supremacy. Neither Hildebrand nor Henry would have been very much pushed for an argument in defence of the positions which they held, or assumed, if these had been

exposed to no more formidable attack than that of the favourite assertion of the Presbyterian Covenant. "Headship"—His Holiness may be supposed very naturally arguing—"if chosen to denote that supremacy which Christ exercises over the Church He Himself has founded, is, of course, a position as much above, as it is different from, every other. The authority which we hold over the government of the Church is not rival, but subordinate to—not independent of, but derived from His." As the disputes between the various Christian communions of the world have respect not to the existence or non-existence of Christ's Headship—since this is acknowledged by them all—but to the laws of sub-government, (so to speak) which He has indicated in His written Will, it is clearly most illogical and absurd for any one to cover its peculiar principles, in respect to these, under the assertion of a rudimentary truth, which all equally admit. Certainly some more conclusive argument must be selected by Presbytery whether against the supremacy of Popes and of Kings, or in favour of the supremacy of its own General Assemblies. For, if the non-existence of any *earthly* "Head" over the visible Church be enough to overthrow the assumed authority of Popes and Sovereigns, as involving claims of earthly Headship, it must be equally sufficient to deny the same authority to General Assemblies,—which also, I believe, hold their sittings upon earth. If it be not, the argument must be that the authority assumed by those bodies is neither of a kind, nor of a degree, to be incompatible with the *SOLE* Headship of Christ. But if

proof of such compatibility be left open to General Assemblies, so must it also be open to Popes, to Bishops, and to Kings. Thus the dispute is referred back again to that legitimate ground of argument from which dogmatic fanaticism has withdrawn it. The controversy turns—not on the question whether or no Christ be sole Head,—but on the question to whom He has committed the lawful powers of sub-government over the visible Church,—what the nature of those powers are—whether they represent, in any degree, the powers attached to His Headship, or whether they are so reduced in extent, and altered in their nature when existing in the hands of men, that they are lowered, in fact, to the mere duty of ordering all things “in decency and order.” But whatever be the truth on the important subjects involved in these questions,—whether the Popish, or the Prelatic, or the Presbyterian view be correct as to the nature, the seat, and the extent of “spiritual power”—the Headship of Christ is a truth in itself equally consistent with them all; and nothing can be more clear, that if the principles of Presbytery be true principles on the government and nature of the Church, they must be more coherently expressed, and more logically supported, than by the clamorous repetition of the motto of the Covenant.

Holding as I do that those principles, rightly understood, are sound,—that they are of unspeakable importance to civil society, as well as to the society of the Church, I wish to see them more fairly dealt with. The language referred to not only fails to express them, but positively misrepresents

them, by ministering to notions as to the *nature* of "spiritual power" with which those principles are inconsistent. The right of self-government which, as founded on true ideas of the nature of "The Church" is a principle on which all sound ecclesiastical politics must rest, is one which is nevertheless not susceptible of just expression as a religious dogma, or as an abstract truth. It is a right of too indefinite meaning to be capable of assertion in such a shape. It may exist in a thousand different forms, and is compatible with a thousand different modifications and restrictions. A Church would be self-governed in one sense and in one degree, which elected a single representative, and agreed to abide by his decisions. A Church would be self-governed in another sense and in another degree, whose legislative and executive powers were vested in an Episcopate originally appointed by election. A Church might be self-governed in another degree, which had grown up under conditions of civil society limiting to a certain extent its powers of government, and beyond this limit leaving it free. A Church might be self-governed in other degrees under the infinite varieties of circumstance and arrangement which it is easy to conceive. But the right of self-government in the earthly society of the visible Church,—even if it could be defined with accuracy,—has nothing to do with Christ being King of His Church; that is to say, that the Kingship of Christ, in the only sense in which this expression has any meaning at all, is equally compatible with every form of outward governance, which does not involve defiance of any

of the positive ordinances of His written Will. And to such contravention of His ordinances, the acts and will of EVERY ecclesiastical government *may* lead, whether that government be vested in a Pope, an Episcopate, a Sovereign or a General Assembly. One may be more safe, another less safe, as a guide to truth. But none are to be absolutely trusted. None, therefore, represent the Headship of Christ; nor may that Headship be pleaded by any of them as in any direct sense the foundation of its own authority,—far less as the measure of the inviolability of its own power.*

That the Church has been given the right of self-government through its collective voice may be, and I think is, true—in a general sense corresponding to the general nature of the proposition; though I think it a right founded rather on the natural privilege of every society of men, whatever be their bond of union, than on any particular charter to be found in Scripture texts. But that this right has been given *because* Christ is King of His Church is the purest inconsequence, since all forms of sub-government would be equally consistent with His being such. That the right was given exactly in the kind and degree expressed by the institutions of Scottish Presbytery must have been a gratifying belief to those members of that body, who could prevail upon themselves to entertain it. That the cause of the Covenant was the cause of “Christ’s Crown” was an explicable if not a pardonable assumption on the

* See Appendix, No. 3.

part of a people struggling for such interests as were then at stake ; but in itself, it can only be regarded as the most wonderful confusion of indefinite rights depending on time and circumstance, and of human passions, with irrelevant doctrines of religious truth, which has ever been exhibited in the delusions of excited mind.

That is indeed the heaviest responsibility which any party can incur when it rashly identifies its own principles, and especially its own course in their support, with doctrines of pure religious truth. It is not merely that it may be wrong to do so ; but that it cannot possibly be right. Every party is, indeed, bound to shape its course according to its own sense of religious duty. But none has a right to confound its own sense of religious duty with the positive doctrines of religious truth. It is not merely that that sense *may* be a delusion,—that it *probably* is full of error,—and that it *must* be mixed with some ; but it is that such fanatic feeling survives the sounder principles with which it may have been associated at first ; so that the subsequent course of a party may be, and frequently is, a continued violation of the principles,—a scandal to the interests—which it was originally summoned to defend.

Seldom, perhaps, have higher interests been ultimately involved than in the battles of the Covenant. They deeply affected the social and political interests of the people ; and I believe, that less directly, but still effectively, the interests of religious truth were involved also. It is not, therefore, from depreciating the value of the objects for which those contests were

carried on, that I condemn as fanatical and presumptuous the motto of Covenanting Presbytery. Full of greatness and reality as its principles and intentions were, that motto expressed no part of their value, but rather hid, and still hides, it from the eyes of men. It stood in the way of Presbytery attaining to other truths to which it was not only blind, but opposed, and the honour of asserting which it left, as we shall see, to others. Above all, it is to the extravagance and excess fed by this language, that in some measure, at least, that reaction may be traced, from which Presbytery suffered so long and so grievously.

CHAPTER VII.

HISTORICAL SKETCH CONTINUED FROM THE GLASGOW
ASSEMBLY OF 1638, TO THE RESTORATION.

[1638-60.] Let us now return to the sketch of historical events, and see how the spirit of Presbytery practically worked in the troubled scenes of the succeeding period. We left the Cathedral Church of Glasgow, after the Crown had attempted to dissolve an Assembly which it had been compelled to call ; when the day of retribution had fallen on the Prelates who had so cursed their country ; when the fevered but immovable resolution of the Covenant had found satisfaction in the utter overthrow of its enemies ; and when its remarkable leader had pronounced a curse on those who should attempt to build again the fallen walls of Jericho !

Only six months pass on from the close of this Assembly, and we meet with the Covenanting and Royal armies, encamped, for the first time, on the field of battle. On the one side was Charles I., surrounded by estranged and reluctant followers ;—for, to use the words of a Covenanter, “ the forces of England had failed him like the summer brooks.” On the other was an army as remarkable for its grotesque and disorderly appearance, as for the burning zeal which animated every soldier in its ranks.

It was an army full of ministers of religion, accoutred with swords and pistols; an army which assembled, at beat of drum, to engage in prayer; an army which was within itself a Church; of which every corps possessed a Presbytery, and whose regiments were represented in a General Assembly; an army encamped under a forest of banners, on each of which was written, in golden letters, "For Christ's Crown and Covenant!" Could such men be reconciled to such a Sovereign? Let us look to a few facts, which, though in themselves but the trivial circumstances of a great struggle, are not less full of meaning than greater events.

On the 11th June, 1639, six commissioners from the Covenanters met, by appointment, in the tent of a general of the Royal army. Whilst they were engaged in conference, a person entered the tent unperceived; and the Covenanters suddenly found themselves in the presence of their Sovereign. Their interviews were repeated. Charles I., with his high ideas of the Divine right of Kings and Bishops, and Alexander Henderson, who had sworn, and made all Scotland swear, to maintain the rights of Presbytery as he would maintain the "Crown of Christ," there met face to face, under an open tent. What was the result? Did the personal intercourse of those men, when apart from the streams down which each was borne, bear any relation to the course of their respective parties;—did it indicate in any way the desperate nature of their contest? By no means. Loyalty was a principal clause in the Covenant, and was then really strong in the character of those who swore it.

Gentleness and amenity of disposition were prominent in the character of Charles. Once met, they were willing to meet again. And though we know that Covenanters defended boldly, and stated without reserve, their claims and their complaints, the conference ended in a treaty, which, in securing a free Parliament and free Assembly, secured all the great objects for which these would undoubtedly exert their power. But this was not all. So little did the personal intercourse which then took place, give warning of the irreconcilable hostility of principle which urged the parties on, that it was the decided impression of the Covenanters that Charles had given a more definite assent to all the chief points of their constitution. The fatal hostility of opposite ideas of *Jus Divinum* were for a moment hid under the language of reason, or the forms of courtesy. The Covenanters returned to Edinburgh, to hold their Parliament and Assembly. Charles returned to London, to consult his Bishops. A few months more, and we again meet them encamped face to face, on a field of battle. *Mere* constitutional security for Presbytery could not satisfy the Scotch Assembly. It must needs be voted of *Jus Divinum*. *Even* constitutional sanction to that system could be wrung from Charles only under mental reservation and deliberate deceit. It was a system contrary to *Jus Divinum*,—the *Jus* of Kings, the *Jus* of Bishops.

For eleven years Charles had not met his English Parliament. Now, at last, he was obliged to do so. He wanted money. But he wanted nothing else,—no impertinent advice,—no presumptuous interference.

He was candid enough to say so ; and this too, by the mouth of one, of all others, the most obnoxious, Chief Justice, recently made Lord Keeper, Finch. Naturally enough, then, the Commons were not anxious to part with their only hold over the government of Charles, until they had first secured some equivalent defence. Naturally, too, the discovery had been gaining ground, that the cause of the Covenant was but one form of the common cause of liberty. There was therefore little prospect of supply. Few offensive or angry things, however, were spoken during the course of the debates ; indeed, says Clarendon, only one, and that by a country gentleman, but little known. He said that the supply was for the support of a "*Bellum Episcopale*," and why should not the Bishops pay for it ? Country gentlemen are not generally the first to receive new impressions. What this one said must have been angry, and without doubt it must have been offensive. But the fact of the country gentleman having said it, was full of meaning. It showed that the Episcopal claims of *Jus Divinum* had not only roused the people whom it ventured to invade, but had engendered hatred within its own dominions.

The Parliament was dissolved in haste ; and, as if to justify the only offensive thing which had been said, supply was asked and obtained from the Convocation of the clergy. This was one of the most critical moments in the history of the Civil Wars. The dissolution of this Parliament was one of those long strides in a wrong direction which make up the whole tale of the life of Charles. A sudden damp fell on men's

minds—a sense of coming calamity. But there were bold, discerning spirits, to whom the scent of revolution inspired no fear—men who looked through its troubles with a sort of prescience. There is an anecdote told us of one of them, which helps us to realise forcibly the men and the events of those days. Immediately after the dissolution of the Parliament, when gloom and melancholy was depicted on every countenance, one of the most subtle of the popular leaders was remarkable from others by his bright and smiling aspect. Why this change on the countenance of St. John—he who was habitually morose and smileless? To his eye matters were very hopeful, “for,” said he, “it must be worse before it can be better.” It had to go ill with Charles and with his Bishops, before it could go well with the State and with the Church!

Again did his extravagant ideas of *Jus Divinum* force this unfortunate Prince to war; and again did another *Jus Divinum*, only less extravagant than his own, because thoroughly based upon a *Jus Humanum*, compel him to bow before it. The rout of Newburn was followed by the treaty of Ripon; the treaty of Ripon by the meeting of the Long Parliament.

So far the course of Scottish Presbytery, if extravagant in some of its ideas, and a large number of its forms of speech, is a course honourable to itself and infinitely beneficial to both countries. But with the Civil Wars we enter on a period in which that course is interrupted and distorted by innumerable contradictions and confusions,—not without witness

to the sterling virtues of Presbytery, but exposing with still greater force the vices which fanaticism had induced. Its history, from the meeting of the Long Parliament to the Restoration, may be quickly outlined. Impressed with the idea of its own *Jus Divinum*, and allured by the hope of seeing Presbytery established in England, it refused to accept the full submission made by Charles I. in 1641, to all its demands in Scotland. The known fact of that Prince's adherence to Prelatic principles, under a counter-claim of Divine authority, and former experience of the latitude his policy allowed, threw just suspicion on the motives which had dictated his concessions to the Covenant. Presbytery could not safely, on the faith of such engagements, lend its influence against that Puritan cause with which hitherto its own interests had been identified. Against the disposition, therefore, of some leaders, who in being more moderate were less sagacious, its voice was still for war: and in 1643, it concluded with the English Parliament the celebrated Solemn League and Covenant.

In the terms of this engagement, Scottish Presbytery evinced at once the simplicity and the fullness of its belief in its own *Jus Divinum*. Episcopacy was to be utterly abolished in the English Church; and she was to be reformed *according to the word of God*, and the example of the best Reformed Churches. Who could doubt that they who bound themselves to reform her according to the Word of God, bound themselves to establish Presbytery?

The Independents did! The tide of events was

drifting, in the good providence of God, to a great result. The exclusive claims of rival "Churchmen" were to encounter a new opponent. In the result of the Civil War, the fanaticism of one sect was being severely punished; that of another was now to be rebuked. In the Westminster Assembly of Divines* Presbytery had to fight its way, inch by inch. Conflicting notions of *Jus Divinum* sprang up in every direction, contending fiercely against each other. This contest had, and was clearly intended to have, a great effect. It was needful that men should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, before they would believe the fact, that no form of government or discipline was prescribed by the Founder of the Church. The visible demonstration was required of numberless believers in the existence of such a form being unable to agree in its definition. Something more was needed, too. It was needed that some sect should be exposed to the oppression, or fear of oppression, from all above it, before any could discover the common right to toleration,—the Liberty of Dissent. It may be a humiliating reflection on human character that it has so often required the gross demonstrations of bodily experience, before it could apprehend some of the most obvious maxims of political, and many of the clearest truths of religious knowledge. But so it is. There was need, probably, of Cromwell,—the revolutionist and soldier,

* See note H. [In this note I have examined, more carefully than as it stood in the first edition, the bearing of the Westminster Confession on the great question of the relations between civil and ecclesiastical power.]

—to purify the elements of our political constitution. But there was need, more certainly, of Cromwell,—the Independent and wild religionist,—to enlighten our ideas on the rights and mutual duties of the various members of the Christian Church.

In the establishment of this great principle,—the Liberty of Dissent,—Scottish Presbytery had not the honour of giving its assistance. Its representatives saw with horror and alarm the rise and spread of an opinion as fatal to the claims of its own Assemblies as to those of Prelatic priesthood. “In their sermons in the city,” says Baillie, in a letter dated May, 1645, “the Independents are deviating more and more towards old and new errors, ESPECIALLY LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE.” Indeed this period of negotiation between the Westminster Assembly of Divines and the Long Parliament is the most humiliating passage in the history of Scottish Presbytery. “It demanded,” to use the quaint words of the same authority, “in high and peremptor, but in wise and unchangeable terms, the settling of religion (to wit, the setting-up of Presbyterian government), according to the advice of the Assembly, *without all toleration of any sect.*” Yet at the very moment it was thus demanding of the Parliament to exercise its civil power in subjecting the whole people, “without toleration of any sect,” to its own principles of discipline and faith, it stigmatised every attempt of the same Parliament to modify or change any of its proposed “Articles” as an “Erastian” interference with the government of the Church! If the Parliament consented to receive its articles *simpliciter*, and enact them, *this* was an

exertion of civil power in spiritual things, which it was no more than its duty to make. But if it altered them, this was an Erastian usurpation; and if it refused them, this was the greatest crime of all,—a neglecting to “settle religion,”—the cause of God’s judgments, by pestilence and the sword—a violation of the Covenant!

Fortunately for Scottish Presbytery itself, for England, and for the interests of the Christian Church, those “high and peremptor demands” were not conceded. The best interests of the country and of religion were as much bound up with the defeat of Presbytery in England, as they had been with its success in Scotland. Its value in its own country had not consisted, as its own fanaticism believed, in the Divine authority of its Presbyterian forms; but in the deeper principles of natural right which these had happened to represent. The same forms, when imposed upon another people, not only ceased to possess the same value, but became positively hurtful from their incompatibility with rights as sacred as their own. The claims of Presbytery,—most just and true as asserted against the pretensions of Priesthood,—were most false as asserted against the rights of individual conscience.

Hitherto, as we have seen, Presbytery and Puritanism had worked together. But the alliance of those two great parties was now to cease. Before their victory over a common enemy their interests had been the same. But after that victory was achieved, every good purpose to which their union could contribute had been fully gained. If it had

lasted longer, it must have resulted in the establishment of principles in the government of the Church as unsound and as oppressive as those which had been so well resisted. Fortunately however, the fanaticism of the two parties, from having been formed under somewhat different circumstances, took a corresponding difference of direction. And since this divergence represents a distinction of very great importance, both as regards the moral character of the two parties, and the separate truths they respectively represented in the world, it is important to attend for a moment to the circumstances from which it imperceptibly arose.

The principles of Presbytery had been early laid down with great precision. They had been soon consolidated into a definite and settled system, with a well organised, active, government. Some alterations, as we have seen, had passed upon them in the course of years: but these had been rather of the nature of development than of change. This individuality of Presbytery as a Church had given a corresponding shape to the ideas of Scotland as a nation. The rights of the Church were one with the liberties of the people. Thus Presbytery had concentrated in its support the strongest human passions. Thus, too, the attachment it secured was given to it, *as it was*:—to its principles indeed—but to those principles as represented by its own specific forms. Through these forms its principles had been attacked by the courtiers of Mary,—by the ambition and craft of James,—by the stealth of Spottiswoode,—by the arrogance of Laud. In these forms the same

principles had been defended by the fervour of Knox,—by the intrepidity of Melville,—by the passionate enthusiasm of the Covenant. These circumstances determined the direction which the fanaticism of Presbytery took. It idolised its own system. Intelligent perception of, and just enthusiasm for, the several principles which that system had expressed, degenerated into a blind and ignorant worship of its forms themselves. Thus it insisted on these forms being fitted on a people among whom they had not arisen,—whose feelings they did not express,—whose rights they would have crushed. It considered them as of divine authority, not in virtue of the sacred rights which they embodied in Scotland, but in themselves—in their mere machinery. It called the setting up of Presbytery the “Settling of Religion.” It was so steeped in the drunkenness of self-sanctification, that when it heard the truth it did not know the voice. “Liberty of conscience,” was a sound which awakened no throb of intuitive approval. It fell upon a dull ear, and was rejected as—*an error!*

On the other hand the fanaticism of the Puritans had arisen under a very different impulse. They did not cluster round any definite system, which they loved as embodying their principles, and on the integrity of which the safety of those principles depended. Theirs was the enthusiasm not of defence, but of attack. And to this attack they approached, from all sides, to the citadel of Priesthood. Some chose one, some another, as the point of their assault. They acted, indeed, under a common sense of danger, but with no definite community of purpose after that

danger should be overcome. The impulse under which their minds had shot off from the continually narrowing circle of Anglican divinity, did not stop them at any given line. It did not land them on any other system as definite, and which therefore would have been as likely to tempt to spiritual despotism. On the contrary, it propelled them to various and unequal distances into the trackless regions of dissent. Thus when that work of overthrow was done, in the success of which they were all alike concerned, the Puritans were no longer an united party. Some had been persuaded to pin their faith to the Presbyterian system ; and believed that in the establishment of that, their ultimate object would be gained : many, however, when they approached the point at which this object was within their reach, found they had misinterpreted their own desires. These had been deeper in their origin—truer in their end—than to be satisfied with such result. Thus the more powerful section, fearing the dictation of Presbytery as much as that of Priests, refused to submit to its authority,—maintained their right to freedom of opinion,—and announced to the world, sword in hand, the golden principle of the independence of private conscience.

This great truth, of which Puritanism was the chosen herald, and the means by which it was strengthened to maintain it, are well represented in the position and in the words of him who was the most remarkable man in Puritan England—when after the siege of Bristol, and standing on the ramparts he had stormed, Cromwell wrote these quiet,

but determined words, "FOR, BRETHREN, IN THINGS OF THE MIND, WE LOOK FOR NO COMPULSION BUT THAT OF LIGHT AND REASON."

In this announcement was fulfilled one great, perhaps the greatest, purpose which the excesses of Puritanism were overruled to serve. Irregularity,—variety of opinion, was essential to the conception of a principle which, strange to say, was yet almost new in Christendom. Thus the very waywardness and impetuosity of Puritanism was that which sped it on its mission in the world. It was to champion the rights of individual conscience—the ultimate right to independence of each single mind. It was to defend this principle against pretensions of priests like Laud, and of Assemblies like those of Presbytery.

On the other hand, its fanaticism was evinced in its contemptuous disregard for all the ordinary laws of social and moral obligation, wherever these were opposed to the impulses of its own passion. Puritanism, as we have seen, pursued its course more under a profound sense of the evil of the system to which it was opposed, than with any desire to establish another system as positive in its place. Hence every impulse tending in the one direction, from whatever quarter it came, was sanctified and obeyed. Of the happy general result obtained from this fanaticism I entertain no doubt whatever. No language can express too strongly my deep conviction that the triumph of "the Church" party in the Civil Wars would have been a falling back, and a great one, in the progress of the world; and so, on the other hand, that the triumph of the Puritan cause

was a stride, and a long one, in the advance of truth. But the character of a result is one question,—that of the course through which it has been attained, is another. There is a positive moral character belonging to every act of men, whether as individuals or as parties, separable alike from its consequences, and from the motives under which it has been done. The Puritan party obeyed its instincts, and in doing so served important ends ; but it obeyed those instincts with responsibility, and—more or less—with crime. Certainly the phenomena which its enthusiasm produced, are the most wonderful which have ever appeared on the face of human society ; for in all the actions of Puritanism, even those most doubtful in themselves, there is, as it were, a strange plea in bar of judgment. We who look back on those times can form a sort of cold commercial estimate of our own gain from their struggles. We can judge, in a kind of way, how great that gain has been, and therefore how great might have been our loss. We can see, in short, the dealings of God's providence, and on what side the good lay, which, under His providence, has been educed. But this—which *we* only know and judge of by reason—was *with them* not so much a conviction as a passionate instinct. It sat upon their spirits, so to speak, with a continual presence. They looked upon it as a contest between the powers of good and evil ; and concentrated the whole interest of so great a stake in every action of their daily life.

In this way only can we account for such wonderful scenes as that described by Cromwell, in writing

of his nephew's death. It is, I think, one of the most awful passages of the time. So burning was that young man's conviction, that the King's cause was essentially one of evil, and the Father of it,—the Puritan cause that of good, and the Author of it,—that in his dying moments he spoke of blood and slaughter as his appointed work, if he had been allowed to live. "One thing," says Cromwell, "lay upon his spirit. I asked him what that was? He told me it was that God had not suffered him any longer to be the executioner of HIS ENEMIES!" Equally wonderful is the scene at Windsor, where a group of Roundhead officers, after hours of what they deemed solemn, earnest, tearful "seeking of the Lord," with one accord came to the resolution to bring to the bar of judgment "Charles Stewart, that man of blood"—to which "Charles Stewart" they had—at least the chief among them—vowed in a most solemn Covenant that fidelity and allegiance which the established laws demanded.

Such scenes as these usher us at once into the presence of questions which can never cease to attract and baffle speculation. That those men were the instruments of God's judgments none will be disposed to deny. This, however, both reason and religion teach us, they may have been, and yet have been chargeable as responsible beings with the deepest moral depravity. But it is less easy to reconcile any such judgment on the Puritans, with the apparent fact that they were—not instruments merely, but the *conscious* instruments of His decrees—that they saw the good to which His providence was leading

them, and acted under a deep desire to promote it. There are always two ways of solving such difficulties, of which opposite parties do not hesitate in choosing that which best suits their own dogmas. Some, like Mr. Carlyle, pronounce them at once "God-inspired men," the only "true men," and other such unqualified terms of his hero-worship. Others, again, can see nothing in all their solemn hopes,—their painful struggles,—their deep convictions, but a mass of hypocrisy or delusion: I cannot profess any very profound respect for either of these conclusions. The latter, indeed, is an opinion fast declining; whilst with regard to Mr. Carlyle's I shall only say that his love and admiration of earnestness, resoluteness of purpose, and strength of faith, amount very often to something near idolatry. It is one, however, which, if not systematised into a philosophy, no one will be disposed to rebuke too harshly who appreciates the truths it has rescued from prejudice and ignorance. He has done much to impress us with a true idea of the Puritan character,—how keen was their sense of many noble and important truths, and how unquenchable their desire to establish them in power. But he has not succeeded in doing away with the impression which their history leaves upon the mind,—that in the pursuit of these objects they were audacious, extravagant, fanatic; and that they frequently claimed for their own actions a moral character, which was not only not justly due, but the reverse of that which really attached to them. This, then, I take to be one lesson of their story—to be scrupulously jealous, as we value the sanity of our

own minds, of expressing in the form of religious truths, our own sense of religious duty, or, in other words, the bearing of such truths on the varying circumstances of our outward life. If we do so, as all religious bodies are apt to do, the chances are that we be tempted to do in God's name what He abhors—to enunciate as his holy truths the most trivial of our own conceits, and to follow as the impulse of His Spirit, the most earthly of our own passions.

This is essentially the character and effect of all fanaticisms. Aiming at the realisation of some truth—seen to *be* truth with passionate conviction, and to be in danger of being overborne—they rush impetuously on, overlooking and trampling on other truths without number on their way. At last,—exhausted by their own passion, and having done their appointed work in rooting more or less firmly their favourite principle in the ground of the human understanding,—they generally sink under a reaction which their own excesses have induced.

Such, remarkably, was the history and fate of the fanaticism of the Puritans. They did succeed in rooting firmly in our country the right of all men to freedom of opinion in the various departments of religion and of politics ; and they succeeded, too, not less signally, in proving that the best interests of society and of the individual mind are as injuriously affected by the principles of freedom being pushed to licence, as by those of authority merging into despotism.

The commencement of the “Second Civil War,” in 1648, is the point at which the breach between the Presbyterian and Puritan parties, is first seen

producing prominent effects. That contest, though aided, and perhaps in some degree instigated, by the defeated Royalist and "Church" parties, received its most formidable character from the reaction of Presbyterian loyalty. To this sentiment was added, however, the still stronger stimulus of hostility to that powerful "sect," which now openly resisted the setting up of Presbytery in England, or as the Presbyterians called it, the "settling of religion." But the loyalist reaction of 1648, though strongly sympathised in by the English Presbyterians, received no support from the representative organs of Scottish Presbytery. The Marquis of Hamilton's "Engagement," though supported by a majority in Parliament, was resolutely opposed by the General Assembly. The grounds on which this opposition rested were, some of them, rational enough. The Assembly wisely objected to the restoration of the King to liberty without adequate security being taken for the interests of religion and of liberty. But above all, it saw that the war must necessarily be carried on in conjunction, if not in positive alliance, with that "Malignant" party which Presbytery had vowed, before God and man, to shun, oppose, and punish, as the enemies of Christ and of His Church. True it was, on the other hand, that in the enterprise they would be fighting against the "Sectaries." But this was a battle which, to be fought lawfully, must be fought by Presbytery alone—not in an alliance so unholy—an alliance which the Assembly characterised, with more energy than elegance, as a "joining hands with a Black Devil to beat a White Devil!"

Unfortunate Presbytery! Never did the ideas of any party stand in more hopeless disconnection with all the possibilities of its situation. Loyalty to such a King—devotion to such a Covenant! Too scrupulous to give up the one—too passionate in its conviction to compromise the other! The understanding and the love of liberty deeply seated in its principles and its heart—the wishes and the words of mere formalism and bondage for ever in its mouth! This was a knot which it was impossible to unloose—one which it was absolutely necessary to cut.

The first promise of successful unravelment was given on the Moor of Preston. There the long, straggling armament which, under Hamilton, was marching in name of the Covenant to let loose a Prince, the incarnation of every principle against which that Covenant was sworn,—was met by the army of the "Sectaries," in August, 1648. There was, as there always must be in such encounters, short work on that occasion. Undoubting faith, definite purpose, determined will, against hypocrisy, disunion, hollowness! The troops of Hamilton were scattered like chaff before the charge of Cromwell. In Scotland, the more genuine part of Covenanting Presbytery took arms under the Marquis of Argyll. The revival of Hamilton's broken party was thus effectually prevented. Cromwell advanced to secure the same end; and within three months after the denunciations of the General Assembly against participation with the Sectaries, their great general—the very Prince of the "White Devils," was received with honour in the City of Edinburgh by the leaders of Covenanting

Presbytery, and fêted in the house of that remarkable man—the Regent Murray—who had been her great champion in her first struggles, and under whose government, only eighty years before, her principles and polity had received their first embodiment in the constitution and laws of Scotland.

In the middle of October, 1648, Cromwell retired from Scotland, bearing with him the reluctant but acknowledged thanks of Covenanted Presbytery. He had saved it from the most imminent danger. He had scattered a formidable combination of lukewarm friends and secret enemies, and had enabled the “sincerer part” to possess itself securely of the powers of government. Such good offices could not be overlooked. Even ministers attended the levees of Cromwell in the “Caningate”—still perhaps maintaining the conviction that he was “a devil,” only “whiter” in complexion than “Malignants;” but conscious at least of the invaluable services which his sword had rendered them.

In a very few weeks, however, the alliance of Presbytery with Cromwell was dissolved for ever. Temporary community of interest had alone produced it; inherent difference of character broke it with a crash. It was on the 16th of January, 1649, that the Scottish Commissioners reported, with horror and alarm, to the Parliament then sitting in Edinburgh, that “that day when they were in Westminster Hall, there came into the Hall some trumpeters and horsemen, with a herald, and made a proclamation, the sum whereof was, that, by virtue of an Act of Parliament of the Commons of England, a Commis-

sion was given for trial of Charles Stewart, King of England, and that the Commission was to meet for that purpose to-morrow, at one of the clock in the afternoon, in the Painted Chamber."

The part which Presbytery took on the occasion of this announcement is well known. The Commissioners were instantly instructed to protest, in the name of Scotland, of the Covenant and the Constitution, against an act which was deemed a violation of justice, and of all law human and divine.

I do not sympathise with Covenanting Presbytery in all nor in most of the grounds of its difference with Cromwell. But in this I do. I look upon the execution of Charles I. as Presbytery looked upon it then, as an unwarrantable and needless crime. This, I am aware, is a most unfashionable opinion among "liberal" politicians and "philosophical" historians.* Biographers, like Carlyle, speak of course in terms of triumphant sympathy with this, and all other deeds their idol did. Cromwell did it: he thought it necessary to be done. They therefore think it necessary too, and consequently right. With this summary conviction there is no means of reasoning. But in reference to this event, Mr. Carlyle has condescended to tell us the specific ground on which he thinks this deed was necessary, and forms a subject of congratulation to after times. It broke, he thinks,—and was needed to break,—the idolatry of Kings.

* Since this Essay was published, I have seen with great pleasure the opinion expressed by Mr. Macaulay, that the execution of Charles I. was "not only a crime, but an error."—*Hist. of Eng.*, vol. i., p. 128.

It was as the unpunished insult offered by a Pagan Queen to the volcano which her people had believed a God,—it broke enchantment, and ended servitude !

Perhaps few “philosophical” explanations of any historical event have been less consistent either with reason or with facts. That violent excess on one side is productive of as violent excess upon the other, is a law of our nature which, I should have thought, had been very generally observed,—very proverbially known. The principle is of such general application that it has been admitted to the rank of a text for copy-books. Even, therefore, if Mr. Carlyle had lived and written during the Protectorate of Cromwell, without foresight or knowledge of subsequent events, it would have been strange to anticipate the decay of king-worship from a deed against a king which was revolting to the moral sense—to the judgment and humanity of a vast majority of the British people. But that any man who lives and writes since the Restoration should ascribe such effect to the murder of Charles I.,—with full knowledge of that mad and drunken reaction which again, much more abjectly than before, placed the liberties of the nation at the feet of a despot—is surely not a very happy effort of historical philosophy. I ascribe it, however, to another idolatry, at whose shrine Mr. Carlyle is an abject worshipper—the idolatry of Genius. This, too, is an enchantment and a servitude which it would be well to break. Yet I should doubt the efficacy of an expedient such as Mr. Carlyle thinks (despite the Restoration) was so successful in respect to Kings. He probably knows best whether his reverence for Cromwell would

have been less if that extraordinary man had been shot or hanged. I suspect not. The noblest light which ever flashed from genius may be easily quenched in blood. But this would only exaggerate the memory of its brightness, and enshrine it as the object of still blinder admiration. And so with the right and prerogative of Kings. They may be taken by assault, or cut short in violence. But this, if it be done at the expense of any sacred principle, whether of natural or political obligation, is directly calculated to induce that reaction and excess which in the present instance actually occurred with such long and deplorable effect.

But even if the execution of Charles I. had been capable of producing the effect ascribed to it, it was one of which Scottish Presbytery at least could not recognise the need. Presbytery had no idolatry of Kings. It had long been familiar with the principles of constitutional liberty. Knox had thundered them to Mary. Melville had contested them with James. The whole people had armed in their defence against the assaults of Charles. Upon them all her institutions were founded; nor had they wanted intelligent and just expression in the language of her popular Assemblies. In this very year, only a few months before the trial of Charles I., the General Assembly had boldly and well declared that "a boundless and illimited power was to be acknowledged in no King nor magistrate, neither is our King to be admitted to the exercise of his power as long as he refuses to walk in the administration of the same, according to equity AND THE ESTABLISHED LAWS OF THE KINGDOM."

One year and nine months after his departure from

Scotland, in 1648, Cromwell again crossed the Tweed on his march to Edinburgh. During those one-and-twenty months Covenanting Presbytery had been left to pursue its own independent course. It had been allowed the dangerous liberty of bringing its principles to the test of practice—of trying how they would actually work. And how did they? Alas, but badly! In politics its principal achievement was the mockery of imposing on Charles II. the vows and abjurations of the Covenant. Under its bondage Presbytery was driven to the alternatives (of which certainly it chose the worst) of either giving up their King because he would not take the Covenant, or of accepting him by forcing him to do so. But if men will make their ecclesiastical and political principles the subject of such religious Bonds, and confound their rights with those of the “Crown of Christ,” they will infallibly be compelled either to wink at such religious impositions as were practised at the coronation of Charles II., or else, like others at that time, to find their sense of religious sincerity, and the dogmas of their politico-religious faith, at hopeless variance with the necessities of their case.

But passing the egregious blunders of its political conduct, how was its government conducted in ecclesiastical affairs? This is in some degree a matter of opinion. Then, at least, and perhaps since, some have admired the spectacle it presented to the world. One historian, who was himself a Covenanter, has left us a glowing eulogium on that short, and, as he regards it, brilliant epoch. “Then,” he tells us, “was Scotland a heap of wheat, set about with lilies,

uniform, or a palace of silver beautifully proportioned;" and this seems to have been Scotland's high noon. Nor does this author omit to specify some of the points which principally attract his admiration. "As the beauty of the Scottish Church was bright, so her bands were strong. There was no cause or question in the meanest family in Scotland, but it might become the object of the deliberations of the General Assembly. No error was so much as named. No scandalous person could live. There were not a hundred persons in all Scotland to oppose its decrees. The General Assembly seemed TO BE THE PRIEST WITH THE URIM AND THUMMIM."

Exactly so! Such was the end, deplorable indeed, of those foolish and fanatical ideas which identified the rights of the General Assembly with those of the "Crown of Christ." False principles as to the *origin* of its powers, had very naturally resulted in an estimate as false respecting their *extent*. Since it considered its title to the government of the Church as derived from, and representing the "Headship" of Him who founded it, we need not be surprised that in clinging to its forms, it let slip everything in them which was valuable or true. We need not wonder at the daring extent of its pretensions—nor that in arguing against freedom of conscience it calmly assumed liberty of dissent from its own dogmas to involve liberty of dissent from the authority of Christ Himself. We need not wonder that it allowed "no cause or question" to plead exemption from its power—that it suffered "no error" to be named—no "scandalous person" to live—or finally, that it took to itself the

“urim and thummim,” and seemed to act as High Priest as well as King over a subject people.

Thus had that great body which in its origin, its nature, and its meaning, represented the liberty of the Christian people, and its identity with the Christian “Church”—which was of that people, from that people, represented their power and right of self-government, but no other power whatever,—thus had it become a mere democratic spiritual tyranny,—a thing which did not know its own meaning—the worth or value of its own existence—for what end its life had been born into the world.

Clearly, then, the sooner such General Assemblies were banished and removed out of sight, the better for all men, but more especially better for the true interest of the Presbyterian Church. This great service Cromwell was destined to perform. I need not now detain my readers by dwelling on the controversial correspondence between the Puritan general and the Presbyterian ministers, which preceded the more effective argument of the battle of Dunbar. In general, Cromwell’s sword is a much more intelligible weapon than his pen. In one or two parts, however, of this correspondence, he strikes home to the tender points of the Presbyterian character with all his usual discernment, and more than his usual force and *naïveté* of expression. The confident dogmatism of the General Assembly in its authoritative interpretations of the Word of God, so repulsive, yet so natural to a body which believed itself to represent the powers of Christ’s “Headship,” Cromwell rebukes in terms which, with some anger, are yet dignified, and

with a touch of humour are yet deep and earnest. "Is it therefore infallibly agreeable to the Word of God all that you say? I beseech you, in the bowels of Christ, think it possible you MAY be mistaken!"

What strong and various emotions do these few words convey! We may almost picture to ourselves the countenance with which he wrote them—the frown relaxing into a smile! The character of that extraordinary man's mind, though not, certainly, over-apt to doubt its own perceptions of the truth, could afford him no clue of sympathy with the hard narrow dogmatism of Covenanting Presbytery. His own convictions were indeed sufficiently unbending and assured. In times of the most intricate and varied difficulty, as regarded the practical duty of a Christian statesman, he never hesitated in following the guidance of those convictions, even when they led to courses almost as startling to those who saw them then, as to those who read them now. Yet it was not in his nature to arrive at those convictions without some experience of doubt and conflict. And if they were in some points, or in many points, erroneous, at least they concerned themselves with deeper things than any mere formula of Church government,—worshipped, and almost idolatrously identified with the most fundamental abstract truth of the Christian faith. With such dictatorial dogmatism as that of Presbytery, exercised on such subjects, Cromwell had no sympathy at all. It had been his special work in England to abolish another formula as idolatrously worshipped,—as dogmatically enforced. That which now encountered him in Scotland had indeed

originally expressed a principle as true as it was important. But of this truth Cromwell's mind was fully possessed already ; whilst Covenanting Presbytery, on the contrary, was beginning to let slip its truths in a passionate worship of its forms.

Cromwell did not need to be told that the Christian people were in very truth the Christian Church. Cromwell did not need to be told that Priests had no Divine commission to rule over it. Cromwell did not need to be told that neither Popes nor Kings had the power of " Heads " over it—that they had no authority to declare authoritatively its doctrines, or enact its laws—that these were the offices of Christ Himself, who is the only King and Head of the Church which He Himself has founded. And not only were these truths known to Cromwell, but they were known better and more deeply to him than to Covenanting Presbytery. It had gone back from those truths, or at least stepped aside from them, and was now floundering in a byepath, which, the farther it was pursued, was leading farther and farther away from them. Cromwell, on the contrary, had advanced in the direct line, and had arrived at farther truths, to which those had but led the way. Covenanting Presbytery, from the truth that Christ is the only Head of the Christian Church, had stepped aside to the unjustifiable conclusion, that as such He had delegated His powers to representative Assemblies. Cromwell had followed up the truth with more consequential reasoning. He agreed with Presbytery in denying that any individual, such as Pope or King, represented the Headship of Christ

over the visible Church. But he went a step farther, and said, "Not only is there no individual,—and no order,—but there is no body, be it representative or not, to which is delegated that Headship, or its powers. Christ is the ONLY Head of the Church. But Christ is not on earth; once, indeed, He was; but in the controversies of the visible Church He now only acts by the Word which He has left, and the Spirit which He has sent. But the Word has been committed to no individual,—to no order,—to no body,—but to each man singly, and to all men collectively. And as the mission of the Word, so also is the mission of the Spirit. It is not exclusively given to any individual, neither to any order, neither to any body. As therefore in all controversies, debatings, or doubts, the appeal lies only to Scripture, and as there is no tribunal gifted with the exclusive interpretation thereof, each man's individual soul must have the responsibility of its own convictions. On the independence of private judgment must ultimately rest every sound system for the ascertainment, as also for the preservation of Divine truth. Wherever, therefore, any number of men agree together respecting their comprehension of that truth, let them worship accordingly—God speed them! I will allow none to interfere with their liberty of conscience. By the sword with which I have asserted my own, I will defend theirs also. I pray you, consider the reasonableness of this. Things are not necessarily agreeable to the Word of God because *you* judge them to be so. I beseech you, in the bowels of Christ, think it possible you *may* be mistaken!' "

Such, substantially,* is the language addressed by Cromwell to Covenanting Presbytery. After the event of the battle of Dunbar, in September, 1650, he seems to have entertained a hope that the difficult conviction he had urged on their acceptance in vain before, might find more ready access then. Under this impression, he resumed the correspondence with some Presbyterian ministers who had taken refuge in the Castle of Edinburgh. But he received for answer, that "they had not so learned Christ as to hang the equity of their cause upon events." In this second correspondence Cromwell and the Presbyterians mutually prefer an accusation, on which both of them had better have held their peace. Cromwell upbraids the ministers for interfering with civil and political affairs; whilst they reprimand him and his party with assuming unwarrantably the office and functions of the ministry,—the preaching of the Word. Strange that men who had gone through such experiences as they,—who all their lives had seen politics and religion so inseparably interwoven, that almost in no movement of the time could they possibly be disentangled,—should have brought such senseless charges against each other! But it is, perhaps, stranger still that that Church, which during the whole period of its existence has had such continuous and trying experience of the indissoluble connection between secular and ecclesiastical concerns, that it has seen all the political contests of Scotland more than half ecclesiastical, and all its

* See Appendix, No. 4.

ecclesiastical contests more than half political—it is strange that this Church should be the one which holds that there is an absolute line dividing spiritual and temporal authority,—professes to draw that line with a definiteness corresponding to its importance, and teaches that the slightest infraction of the latter on the former, is a violation of the “Crown rights of the Redeemer!”

We may be grateful to Presbytery exactly in proportion as we remember that its conduct was wiser than this its later dogma. Never did the ministers of any Church trespass more boldly beyond any such imaginary line—never was it more necessary for the ministers of any Church to do so. And when their political efforts took a wrong direction, and they attempted to establish themselves in a spiritual tyranny, never was any better service rendered to the Church than when Cromwell’s military power not only invaded the border-wall, but marched to its capital itself,—dissolved, and dismissed the General Assembly.

One year, as is well known, after the victory of Dunbar, there followed on the same day Cromwell’s “crowning mercy” of the victory of Worcester. So long as Cromwell lived, Scottish Presbytery was now safe from its “Covenanted King,”—and from its own General Assembly. The Protectorate was a period of the happiest repose: as such, it is not only acknowledged, but glowingly described by the keenest historians of the Covenant. Cromwell did not interfere, as he had long before intimated it was “no part of his business” to do, with the religious worship of the Presbyterian Church; nor did he prevent the

meeting of its inferior courts. These, as possessing only fractional parts of that "Headship" which the central Assembly was wont to assume and exercise, he was willing to tolerate, because they had not sufficient authority to attempt intolerance themselves. Thus Presbytery, during the Commonwealth, escaped the schism to which its divisions* would probably have led, had they been allowed to meet in the General Assembly. And thus, too, what was deep in its religious convictions, and true in its love of liberty, had time to become deeper, truer, firmer; to concentrate the energies and spirit of the Presbyterian people in defence of their real rights; and thus to nerve them for that dreadful time of trial from which,—thanks be to God, and under Him to those principles of their Church, which, in being so full of truth, were so capable of inspiring love,—they at last came out victorious.

It was on the same memorable day with the victories of Dunbar and Worcester, the 3rd of September, 1658, that the Protector Cromwell died. Eight years before, in the same correspondence to which I have referred, in alluding to the reception given by Covenanting Presbytery to Charles II., he had used these memorable and prophetic words:—"Whom you have received like fire into your bosom, of which God will, I trust, in time make you sensible!" And now—he being gone—that time was come!

* See note I.

CHAPTER VIII.

GLANCE AT THE PERIOD FROM THE RESTORATION,
1660, TO THE REVOLUTION.

[1660-88.] WITH the restoration of Charles II. Prelacy once more entered Scotland. It came under circumstances and with an aspect, if possible, still more forbidding than before:—it came under the patronage of a profligate and irreligious Court:—it came in the train of a council of nobles rioting in every meanest vice:—it came with the same beginnings of deceit, and with ends of even greater violence:—it came with the abject and disgraceful abandonment of every constitutional security for civil and religious liberty, which had been gained during the late struggle, or which had existed before it:—it came represented by a Primate, who, like all his predecessors, was a traitor to the cause he had professed to serve; but who, in a degree much worse than any of them, was false and selfish, unscrupulous in his ambition, cruel to those below, and abject to those above him:—it came, in short, to use the words of one whose authority cannot be doubted, “with such cross characters of an angry Providence,” that it seemed God was against the Bishops.

Such is the testimony of one of the four men who were sent down to Scotland with English consecration,

as before—of *the* one, who, besides being a Bishop, was a true minister of the Church of Christ—the testimony of ROBERT LEIGHTON. This is a name which has secured the reverence of after times, and abated even the rancour of his own. It is a name which, in connection with the circumstances of his day, deserves, I think, especial honour. He was deeply religious, yet he was not fanatic; he was a Bishop, yet he was not a “Churchman;” in an age of fiercest bigotry or grossest irreligion, he was an earnest Christian, and a large-minded man. During all the periods of his life he may be said to have walked alone. As a Presbyterian minister he had been a moderate, and therefore a suspected member;—more engaged in the cause of personal piety than in the battles of the Covenant. As a Bishop he was still more apart from all his brethren; he was a humble preacher of the Word; a striver for the peace, not the oppression of the Church. As a Protestant he could speak of the errors of the Reformation, and see points of beauty in some ideas and institutions connected with the Church of Rome. Such was Robert Leighton, whom I mention as not more singular among the Scottish Prelates of his own day, than alone in the history of Scottish Prelacy.

I mention him also for another reason. He was a disbeliever in the *Jus Divinum*, or the indispensability of his office in the Church; yet he accepted that office amongst a people to whom it was most obnoxious, and continued to hold it for many years under a government, whose every act was as much a violence to humanity and common justice, as to his

own holy disposition. If we knew only so much we might suspect his integrity ; but this is but half his story : the other half removes all stain from him, and seems full of instruction to us. His adherence to Episcopacy was naturally brought about. To a mind engrossed by the realities of religion, the Covenant and the " Crown of Christ " could have no connection. Not sharing in the passions which controversy breeds, he was not deceived by the false associations which they suggest ;—he was cold ;—he became estranged. The object of the struggle partook of the dislike with which he regarded the mode in which it was conducted ; he came to think of Episcopacy the better form of government, and that adopted in apostolic times, though his thoughtful mind never deemed it necessary to the being of a Church. In accepting the office, he was doubtless sincerely guided by a desire to benefit his country, and a belief that he might do so in that capacity. But scarcely had he been consecrated, when he was disgusted and alarmed by the temper and the conduct of his new associates. Weary of them, and they of him, he separated from them before they reached Edinburgh. He was not with them in their pompous entry into that city ;—he was not with them in their disgraceful legislation ;—he was not with them in the still more disgraceful use they made of the powers which they obtained ;—he was not with them in his life ;—he was not with them in his death. In vain he used every exertion to restrain violence, to mitigate oppression, to advise a compromise with Presbytery, and to persuade Presbytery to accept terms from its opponent. He was

met by the cry of no compromise,—no toleration—from the one party,—and by the determined resolution of no surrender by the other; until at last, having done his part,—thwarted,—suspected,—maligned,—he gave up the struggle, resigned his office, and retired to the walks of private piety.

I should be willing to leave the history of Scottish Prelacy with the departure from it of Robert Leighton. The only name which from the Reformation to the Revolution stands out in connection with that party, as that of a man eminent for Christian worth and wisdom, was compelled to quit its service, unable to reconcile it to the Scottish people; but more than this—unable to endure the vices with which it seemed inseparably connected—unable to reconcile it to the common laws of justice and humanity.

I have no intention of detailing any of the horrors which were enacted in Scotland during the reign of Charles II., under the administration of Middleton, of Lauderdale, and of the Duke of York. “No part, I believe,” says Mr. Hallam, “of modern history, for so long a period, can be compared for the wickedness of government to the Scots administration of this reign.” Well may the historian pronounce the sentence of posterity on the horrid crimes of those shameful years! This was the time when the followers of the Covenant,—exposed to confiscation, torture, and death, hunted by a brutal soldiery, who were led by still more brutal officers, and encouraged, horrible to relate, by a wicked and usurping priesthood,—maintained alive the unquenchable flame of liberty. Extravagant as their ideas often were, to an extent

which sometimes hurried them into crime,—such as the murder of the worthless oppressor, Sharp, Archbishop of St. Andrews,—we owe to their stern enthusiasm the safety of the most precious gift of nations,—the idea and the love of constitutional liberty. To their enemy too, to the Scottish Prelacy of that time, we owe something. It began its course under the patronage of oppressing power; it continued it in violation of national right, and to the overthrow of constitutional law. At certain moments it was urged by bigotry in this career; but generally it had not even this poor excuse. It is deeply instructive to know to what personal degradation, to what wicked passions, perseverance in such a course has led professing ministers of the Church of Christ. Doubtless there were some good and Christian men among the Episcopal clergy of Scotland, even during this reign. But that they were the exception there cannot be a doubt. We have the testimony of Burnet, an eye-witness, and intimately acquainted with all the actors on that memorable stage, for the base and cruel part which Scottish Prelacy played. It is impossible to follow his narrative without indignation and disgust. Nor can all the extravagancies of persecuted enthusiasm, on which “Church” writers dwell so much, afford the shadow of a palliation for the course which their party pursued. We read with especial horror, that at the very time when English Episcopacy was beginning to move in the cause of liberty—when its doctrines of passive obedience were yielding under the influence of circumstances in which it was distasteful or dangerous to practise them—when a Popish monarch

became the advocate of tolerance, and the famous contest against the "dispensing power" began—the two "governing Bishops" in Scotland sent up an offer to James II., signed by several of the "spiritual" bench, to the effect that they would offer no opposition to the removal of disabilities from those of "His Majesty's religion," provided the enactments against the Presbyterians were maintained in force. But as it was clear that a Papal tolerance must involve also a tolerance of Presbytery, most of the Scottish Bishops ventured to record their votes against the abolition of the tests. They cannot be honoured for this resistance, because it was clearly founded on the same motives which, until then, had marked their course with the basest servility recorded of any party in our history. They had aided and abetted Charles II. in every most oppressive measure of his reign; and worse, they had aided his coarsest agents in the most cruel execution of most cruel laws. Only a few years before, they had used all their influence in the imposition of those test oaths which were so odious in the principles they involved, and so doubly odious in the purposes they were intended to subserve—for "explaining" which the Earl of Argyll was executed; and rather than take which, about eighty of their own clergy had resigned their livings, and left their service. With a single eye, too, to the persecution of the Presbyterian people, the same party had prostrated even principles of Episcopal authority, which it was their duty to defend.

We may imagine what the Episcopal clergy of

Scotland must have been, after this small leaven of honour and of virtue had been purged away. We can understand how an event on which the best hopes of religion and of liberty in this country were depending, was heard of with horror and alarm by the Scottish Prelates. How, indeed, could they participate in the joy of their country, when the cry arose in England that William of Orange had set sail to help her? They knew, that if tyranny was to cease, their own power must cease along with it. If the structure of constitutional liberty was to be reared, their own foundations had first to be removed. They saw this—they felt it. “No estate were His Majesty’s creatures as they were.” Such had been the confession of Gladstones, many years before, to James I.; and it might have been repeated, if possible with still greater truth, by Gladstones’ successors, to James II. For years they had stood their ground only under the protection of the fierce soldiers of Dundee—a man who executed the laws under which they held their power, “even to shooting many on the highway who refused the oath administered to them.” And now this protection was about to be withdrawn. That fleet, therefore, which was watched with straining eyes of anxious hope by the Protestantism, not of Britain only, but of Europe, hung out only black flags to them.

It is well known that the “Church party” in England, and the English Bishops, with a few memorable, and, it must be added, not dishonourable exceptions, showed a very different disposition, and took a very different course. They could

afford to welcome William's fleet; and did so, with but faint disguise. And why? Because their position did not rest on the disposition of James;—because they had—what their Scottish brethren had not,—a solid basis on national opinion. They were plants of native growth, deriving subsistence from the soil in which they stood. They had indeed been fostered under the cover of prerogative; and they had not been ungrateful to their nurse. But they were now independent of its shelter—they could flourish in the open air; and perhaps they would have flourished better if they had tried it sooner. Therefore, and therefore only, was it that English Episcopacy could rejoice in the return of liberty—that they could look it in the face and not be withered. Scottish Prelacy could not do so, because its condition was precisely the reverse. It was a rootless, sapless trunk, deriving no nourishment from the soil. It was a fungus growth—an unhealthy parasite, living only under the shadows of despotism. How could it thrive when those shadows were withdrawn? Accordingly, in the last scenes of its existence, we find Scottish Prelacy giving testimony against itself,—witnessing, in its death, the real nature of its birth and of its life. It trembled at the approach of William; and when his fleet was driven back by storms, it hastened to congratulate the King. At this juncture, the Scottish Bishops did what the English refused to do, even when required. Burnet informs us that these last declined to express any “abhorrence” of the intended invasion. They could not do so conscientiously; but in all sincerity the

Scottish Bishops could. They "abhorred" it, doubtless, with all their hearts. Why they did so, and why the English Bishops did not do so, is fully explained by the events which followed.

The "abhorred" invasion being soon actually made, James had to withdraw his troops from Scotland. Immediately the clergy all over the Lowlands of Scotland, where their system had earned the greatest hatred, were exposed to the attacks of fanatic mobs. They were "rabbled" out of their livings. It does not appear, however, that any sanguinary revenge was taken. The butcheries of Claverhouse were not visited on their heads—though I fear that more impartial times will not acquit their memories of at least some measure of the guilt. As it is, I profess my inability to grieve over the hardships to which they were now exposed. They had been rabbled *into* their livings—it was natural that they should be rabbled *out*. About two hundred ministers, we are told, were ejected in this lawless manner; but not far from double this number had been ejected in 1662 by the agents of Scottish Prelacy. True, this former ejectionment had been made under the cover of law. But this was the master grievance. The nation's mouth had been made to speak against itself. Priests persecuted its religion—Parliaments trod down its laws. The first took the name of God's law,—the latter took the name of human law, in vain. And now this system of mockery was to end—the popular mouth was to be opened—its smothered voice was to resume its utterance. What wonder if its first accents were pronounced in rage? What wonder if

its words were as words of cursing? The Editors of the "Spottiswoode" are anxious to impress us with the injustice inflicted at the Revolution on the Episcopal clergy, by the Covenanting mobs. Doubtless they were hardly used. But the injuries they met with were as nothing to the injuries which they and their agents had inflicted when they had possessed the power.

It forms, however, no part of my design to conceal the fanaticism of Presbytery. I only wish to show how that fanaticism was roused. With its claims of *Jus Divinum*, in the abstract, I have as little sympathy as with the same claims when made by Bishops. But for one thing, the claims of Covenanting Presbytery, and those against which it fought, would seem to be equally fanatic. But on account of that one thing we may rejoice in the triumph of the former, and in the discomfiture of the latter. The claims of Presbytery in Scotland were, as I have before expressed it, thoroughly based upon a *Jus Humanum*. Those of Prelacy in the same country were as thoroughly opposed to it. They were urged in contempt of truth, and supported in contempt of justice. The history of those two parties abound in illustration, as regards them both, of the danger under which all religious parties lie from the temptation to sanctify their own dogmas, and their own passions, by presumptuous appropriation of God's name, or laws. But the history of one especially—that of Scottish Prelacy—seems designed to warn us of the tenfold danger of that temptation when it leads men in the face of the natural rights either of individuals or of society. When the ambition of a Priesthood associates it with a party,

which, like Prelacy in Scotland, has been led to maintain its position not merely in words of anger, but in deeds of violence, and violation of the moral law, the corrupting tendency is terrible indeed.

It was against such a spirit that Scottish Presbytery had to maintain a constant struggle from the moment when the semi-Prelacy of its own country became real Episcopacy—gifted with the title, and endowed with the spirit, of an Order. It was against this that all the events of that struggle seemed to have been overruled to present a solemn testimony. It was against this that those “cross characters” of an angry Providence appeared which were manifest to Robert Leighton. It was against this that Presbytery in the end was made to triumph; and it is for its triumph over this, as well as for the value of many of its own principles, that it is entitled to an honoured name among those great parties which have contributed most materially to the wisdom and happiness of the Christian world.

PART II.



CHAPTER I.

EXAMINATION OF THE EXISTING DEVELOPMENTS OF PRESBYTERY AND PRELACY IN SCOTLAND.

BUT why, it may be asked, have I thus gone over again the fierce battles of the Covenant, and retraced the long contests between Presbytery and Prelacy in Scotland? Because they are living parties: because they are fighting now: because, with all the hereditary features of their character, they still stand opposed, as they stood of yore. Presbytery has not lost its wild, wayward vigour—it is marked with the same rugged virtues,—in excess, it tends to the same vices of opinion. Prelacy has not abated its narrow bigotry: it is incited by the same grasping ambition to be national: its opinions tend to the same sacerdotal usurpations. The Divine right of Bishops is still the central point in the theology of the one: the “Crown of Christ” is still extravagantly quoted in the system of the other. They are both things of the present day. It is well that we should know what is to be hoped or feared from each; and in order to anticipate their future, we must understand their past.

Especially, in respect to Presbytery, we must know its traditions, in order to seize the meaning of its forms. It sometimes belies itself. Under the incoherence of Cromwell there were hid the great powers of the Protector; under the fanaticism of the Covenant lay the noblest maxims of the Reformers. All parties must have their outward clothing, and sometimes that clothing is not an ornament, but a disguise. We must remember this when we look at Scottish Presbytery. We may hear it inculcating the authority of "the Church" in language not less peremptory than has been used by Rome; but we must remember that "the Church" of Presbytery is not "the Church" of Priesthood. We must remember that the high claims which that language expresses, are in fact nothing but the inherent claims of the Christian community to exercise self-government under a representative system. If we do not remember this, Presbyterian forms of speech will certainly not always remind us of the fact. These are often inconsistent with any but a sacerdotal theory. We may hear Presbyterian Assemblies designating the power they claim as the "power of the keys," and we may hear them quoting in support of it the same texts which have always been the favourite texts of priests. We may find, for instance, that the first text quoted by the Free Church in support of its distinctive dogma is likewise the favourite text of Rome. The same motto which floats on the banner of the Free Church, is the motto which, for ages before the Free Church was born, has floated on the banner of the Papacy. Who that has visited Italy

does not remember that great circle from which the glorious dome of St. Peter's rises, and on which is inscribed, in letters of gold mosaic, "TU ES PETRUS, ET SUPER HANC PETRAM ÆDIFICABO ECCLESIAM MEAM : ET TIBI DABO CLAVES REGNI CÆLORUM." This, too, is the text first and prominently quoted by the "Constitutional Catechism" of the Free Church in support of its favourite dogma of the absolute and sacred distinction and separation to be maintained between the persons severally entrusted with civil and spiritual power.*

Nevertheless, we need not be alarmed. The claims of Presbytery are not the claims of Priesthood. The extravagance is due to the men who advocate them, not to the claims themselves. These claims have no more connection with the text above quoted, than with the most irrelevant passage we could select from the Bible. It is merely the language of the party. We must make allowance for traditionary forms of speech. Necessity is laid upon Presbyterians to quote Scripture for everything they say or do. Andrew Melville spoke of the "power of the keys;" therefore, whether logically or not, the text from which that expression is derived must needs be quoted. But, fortunately for Presbyterianism, John Knox, though his disciples used this formula of expression, had laid down principles which effectually reduce its claim over the "power of the keys" to the level of the power possessed by every club, whether in the religious, the political, or the social world—

* See note J.

that of excluding from its own body such members as transgress its laws. The "power of the keys," therefore, in the mouth of Presbytery, is nothing but a very solemn and startling name, for a very common and a very intelligible thing. By the reiterated denials of its own Reformers, Presbytery is prevented from believing that there is any authority on earth gifted with the power of binding and loosing in heaven, merely by virtue of its decisions here. Nor is this all: Presbytery is prevented also from believing that there is any authority in any earthly body—in "councils, realms, or nations"—which, even on such matters as the interpretation of Scripture, can step *authoritatively* between the individual mind and its own convictions. Further still: Presbytery does not believe that there was any machinery established in the Christian Church by which such powers as may have been given to the Apostles personally, could be continued afterwards. It does not believe that there was any law of outward succession laid down, so that those to whom such powers descended, could claim from all men a recognition of their right.

These are fortunate incapacities of belief! Under their protection we may smile, when we hear Presbytery claiming the "power of the keys." It means only the opening and shutting its own private doors. Its right to this power has nothing to do with the text it quotes in its support,—any more than the overthrow of usurping Prelacy in 1638 had to do with the crumbling of the "walls of Jericho." Presbytery does not and cannot claim the rights given to St. Peter and his eleven brethren. Such

rights as it can claim, consistently with its own principles, are wholly different in kind, and infinitely inferior in degree. There is no logical connection whatever, therefore, between the rights which are really due to Presbytery and this text which is quoted in their support. But whatever may be our disappointment in the logic of thus quoting in support of one kind of power, passages which refer to another kind, it is at least satisfactory to know, from indisputable facts and documents of received authority, that Scottish Presbytery early repudiated the daring and intolerable claim of a personal inheritance of Apostolic powers.

It only remains to account, on behalf of Presbytery, for the use of language which justifies so different an impression. This it is not difficult to do. Causes which have been already traced, had early given a personal character to the contests for freedom in the Scottish Church. In a personal sense, and in a passionate degree, therefore, the claims of Presbytery were urged as of Divine right. To elevate them to, and maintain them in, this position, Divine words must, of course, be quoted. This has been, and still is, one of the hereditary necessities of Presbytery; it is entailed by the traditions of its history. Presbytery, as a religious party, is exposed to the same temptation to which all such parties have yielded more or less—that of claiming, carelessly and presumptuously, the direct sanction of God for its own opinions. In past times, Scottish Presbytery has suffered, not merely in its reputation in the Christian world, but in its own religious

character, from the infection of this common vice. And at the present moment this vice is leading it to belie itself—it is concealing its many noble principles from the view of others; and if it does not take earnest heed, it may soon conceal them from itself. Every line which does not go direct to truth, diverges more and more rapidly away from it. The fierce fanaticism of the Civil Wars, and the crimes which it produced on both sides, were the legitimate fruit of seeds which had been sown before it. Self-grateful claims of *Jus Divinum* were among those strewn most lavishly; and they produced the foulest weeds. And what a gathering and burning was required before the soil could again ripen the fruits of peace! Yet men are scattering those tares again! They are rising thick in every corner of the religious world—they are colouring deeply the growing corn. Take the little field of Scotland, and in Scotland let us look for a moment at a body, which, to say the least, is a very important and a very typical branch of Scottish Presbytery.

I have already more than once referred to a Catechism, published by the Free Church, and sanctioned by its General Assembly. Perhaps the whole tone and intention of this document cannot be more concisely or more accurately described, than by saying that it is directed to prove that the opposition of that body to everything it does not itself hold, and its omission of everything it does not itself practise, is due to its maintenance of the “Crown of Christ:” in other words, it is directed to prove that every opinion different from its own, whether on matters of

doctrine, or of government, or of mere ritual, is, in some way or other, a violation of the "Headship of Christ." To such an inconceivable depth of extravagance is this carried, that the rite of confirmation—the use of the cross in baptism—kneeling at the communion—and the practice of setting aside any day but Sunday for peculiar devotions,* are gravely instanced as "interferences with the Headship of Christ:" and not only are these mentioned in this character, but they are mentioned side by side, as if of the same nature, with some of the grossest corruptions of Romanism.† The bare mention of this fact is quite sufficient; there is no need of comment. It is an instance, manifest to nakedness, of the most unseemly and irrational identification of sacred truths with the most trivial and provincial notions. Such promiscuous lists of disconnected things,—some momentous, others utterly unimportant, all laid under one sweeping and indiscriminate denunciation, are indeed to be found among the first passionate words of the sixteenth century;—accompanied not unfrequently by fierce invocations of the "Secular Arm" to proscribe and persecute. Such precedents may be found, alas, too easily. But it is sad and humiliating indeed to find such passages gravely reproduced in the present day—not one whit more just in discrimination, or more enlarged in spirit.‡

* See Appendix, No. 5.

† See note K.

‡ The author of the Free Church Catechism, in a correspondence with myself, which he has lately published, has referred to a passage in the First Book of Discipline, in which the keeping of holidays, and the observation of Christmas are denounced as an "abomina-

The power exerted over the human mind, by religious parties, is one of strange power indeed ! It reduces the finest gold to dross ; it heaps up rubbish on the deepest foundations of the Truth ! On a great scale, and its worst form, we have seen it in the age-accumulated corruptions of the Papacy. Whoever wishes to study its operation on a small scale, compressed in a narrow space, let him analyse the Catechism of the Free Church,—full of the noblest, deepest truths of the Reformation—full, also, of the narrowest, shallowest glosses of a provincial history.

Yet now, not less than formerly, Scottish Presbytery is destined, I believe, to influence beneficially the opinions of the Christian world. None of its original principles have been lost. Its claims of right are still broadly based on the natural rights of the Christian society. Its *Jus Divinum* is still so far true, that it rests on *Jus Humanum* ; and every natural right which is really such, is in some sense a *Jus Divinum*. Presbytery is still anti-sacerdotal in its nature, though sometimes priestly in its words. Its government is still based on the representative system. Its office-bearers are still only the officers of its people. Its ministers are still destitute of the character of an Order. They are not above the Church, but of it ; not “ Lords over God’s heritage,”

tion ” “ which ought not to escape the punishment of the civil magistrate.” There is but too much consistency in this reference. Might not the latter part of this paragraph have suggested some doubt as to the weight to be given to the first ? Why are memorable warnings mistaken for illustrious examples !

but only members of the same. They have not the power to constitute themselves a priesthood, even if they had the will. It is forbidden by their history. For a considerable time after the Reformation they were not even set apart, as they now are, by the ceremony of ordination, but only by election confirmed by prayer. Therefore we may feel assured of this, that whatever may be the extravagance of its language, a Church resting on such a basis must ultimately find that it cannot, consistently with its own nature, rest its claims on any higher ground than the natural right of every society to govern itself,—a right which is not, and cannot be, absolute or invariable in the amount of freedom it involves, but dependent, like the same rights in political society, on its relations to time and circumstance. Presbytery may not always remember this, but others will infallibly remind it of the fact. It may speak of the distinction between “Church and State,” just as if the “Church” were a priesthood, or in any way separate from the whole body of believers. But we know that such a definition is incompatible with the conditions of its own existence. We know, therefore, that the distinction which rests upon it cannot be ultimately maintained. We know that the Assemblies of Presbytery are in no mystical way distinct from the assemblies of the State. We know that the only distinction which obtains between them is wholly the result of two characteristics in the nature of the former—1st, That they are exclusively composed of men who are members of the same religious body; and 2ndly, That the subject of their deliberations is the regulation of ecclesiastical

concerns. It is unquestionably true that these circumstances do constitute a distinction only too apparent, and only too likely to continue to demand always what they demand now—a separation between Christians met to legislate for the visible society of Christ, and Christians met to legislate for the society of the world. But we know that these distinctive circumstances arise, the one from the fact of religious divisions, and the other from the fact of religious principle being so dissevered from the practical affairs of life. These are the only facts which divide “the Church” from “the State.” They are facts which will probably continue to divide them, in some measure at least, to the end of time; but it is a division which, so far from flowing from the Will of God, would be healed and closed exactly in proportion as that Will is “done on Earth.”

Again: Presbytery may speak of the “keys” given to the Apostles, but it will be continually reminded that on its own principles the Apostolic powers have not been inherited by successors; and if at any time Presbytery should dare to claim those powers, its physical organisation does not supply it with a hand to grasp them. Such definite authority cannot be inherited under so indefinite a title. An ancient dynasty, resting on traditionary reverence, and reigning by virtue of hereditary succession, may claim a *Jus Divinum*, and on that claim found a tyranny. But the descendants of an elected King—born of the popular will—reigning in the name of liberty—for *them* to use the language of the Divine right of Kings would be ridiculous—to act upon it would be

fatal. In like manner, the "spiritual" councils of Presbytery are nothing but the organs of a constitutional government. They have, indeed, a Divine right in one sense—and that a broad sense, not a narrow priestly one. They have a natural right—a necessary right—to independence of authority. But that independence is not derived from St. Peter or his brethren, any more than the authority of a constitutional Sovereign is derived from the Divine right of Kings. It is an independence neither definite in character, nor invariable in degree. It is an independence, indeed, very necessary to be maintained, but the maintenance of which may be tempered as the earlier Presbytery of Scotland did temper it, by concession to the demands of outward circumstances. Nevertheless, we are thankful for those delusions which put at end to all compromise, when any compromise would have involved entire surrender. We are thankful for the extravagance which encased as it were in steel the great principles of Presbytery, when they were in danger of being wholly overborne. The concessions of 1572 were harmless, because the Prelacy to which they were made was a mere political corruption: but when the Prelacy of Scotland became gifted with its fanatic "inner life," we rejoice that another fanaticism arose to meet it. If the State owes much to the passions of the Revolution, the Church owes more to the spirit of the Covenant. It supported what no spirit less excited could well have borne. It carried through fire and blood the most precious principles of the Scottish Reformation.

And this is our hope now. The extravagances of Presbytery are still covering with useful husks the seed of its inner principles. It may sometimes misinterpret the spirit of its own traditions; but it is preserving their letter with the jealousy of the Rabbis. And let me say, also, that such extravagance as Presbytery has lately shown, has, like its extravagance in former times, been contracted in defending its natural and legal rights. The struggle which has ended in the formation of the Free Church, originated very much in the same cause from which all the former struggles of Presbytery began. It arose from the principles of Presbytery being infringed—in violation of natural right, and of positive institution—by an unconstitutional statute. It became more determined from a still more unconstitutional use being made of that statute's provisions; and its fatal result was precipitated by the most blind and prejudiced obstinacy on the part of the civil government. The government of 1637 were hardly more ignorant of the elements they had to deal with, than the government of 1842. The former believed that very few would ultimately resist the Liturgy, until they heard of the aspect and of the arms of the thousand "Supplicants" who crowded the streets of Edinburgh. The latter believed that only some five—or ten—or twenty ministers would maintain their principles at the expense of their livings, until they heard of the number of that resolved procession which, on the 18th of May, 1843, marched from the Assembly Hall to the Cannon Mills. There is this difference to be marked, indeed, between the

two governments. That of 1637 had the excuse of bigotry—that of 1842 had not. And it will be recorded in history, not certainly to the honour of those who were responsible, that the institutions of Scottish Presbytery received their most fatal blow under a “Conservative” government, and for the sake of a statute manifestly—undeniably—unconstitutional: because passed manifestly—undeniably—in violation of the Act of Security and Treaty of Union.*

But I have said that—not one only, but—both the parties whose histories I have traced, are now alive. We have seen how Scottish Presbytery is still following its old traditions—how there is still imbedded in its character the same truths and rights—how its words still breathe, with strangely retentive memory, the recollection of its struggles and its wrongs. The present bears as strong witness to the past, in the case of Scottish Prelacy. It, too, is following its old traditions. One thing is to be premised, however, in respect to the Episcopal Church in Scotland. That communion, considered as—what it is—a transplant from the Church of England, which gradually, and by legitimate means, has successfully struck root in another country, is thoroughly entitled to sincere respect. But, in so far as it represents, and professes to do so, the spirit and temper of that party with which its name is historically connected, it is to be held, I think, in not much higher estimation than in former times. External circumstances have indeed

* See Appendix, No. 6.

greatly tended to improve its character ; and so far as the influence of these has been inevitable, its character is accordingly improved. But, judging from the publications of the Spottiswoode Society, and such other evidences as have come before us, it continues to retain only too much of its ancient temper. Its clergy are not perhaps now incited by the desire of possessing the revenues of St. Andrews or of Glasgow ; but they take part with those who were. They would not, probably, urge the persecution of those who attend Presbyterian “ Conventicles ; ” but they identify their party-history, and associate their sympathies, with those who did. They cannot grasp the place, or the power, which their predecessors succeeded in usurping ; but they indulge the same spirit of violence and injustice in dealing with the facts and with the characters of history which the elder Scottish Prelacy evinced in dealing with the people and with the laws of Scotland. They twist, and misrepresent, and conceal, and special-plead, in order to secure for themselves that national rank in the history of Scotland which never did belong to them, except by usurpation.

Whoever doubts this description, or thinks it unwarrantably harsh, let him read the publications of the “ Spottiswoode ” and other productions of the same school. There is evident throughout, the same bad effects which have ever flowed from the sanctification of human passions by religious parties,—the same contempt of *Jus Humanum* in following self-grateful notions of *Jus Divinum*. And all this, at least in a great degree, is the result of that one passion which

has been always the curse of Scottish Prelacy, and the incentive to all its crimes—the ambition of nationality. At this moment, the consequences of this passion threaten the Episcopal Church in Scotland with deserved division. Although owing all it has, and all it had, to the support of English Bishops and English power, Scottish Prelacy roused the indignation of Laud by a display of pettish independence. They wished for a Liturgy; but it must be a Liturgy of their own. Accordingly, the Service Book appeared, with some few Romanist alterations from the English form. But Laud had a principal hand in framing this. It was known all over the world as Laud's Liturgy. The pride of nationality, therefore, has not been entirely satisfied; and more recent patchings have vindicated the right of Scottish Prelacy to a theology more Romanist than that of England. It can boast that, unlike the English Church, it has needed no revival from the school of Oxford—no teaching of Anti-Protestant opinions, for it has held them long ago.

This boast has much foundation. From its birth to the Revolution—the period during which its character was formed—Scottish Prelacy has been more or less connected, directly or indirectly, with the “Popish party,” and as constantly opposed to the whole genius and tendency of the Scottish Reformation. It is quite natural that its opinions should have a corresponding tendency. It is not my intention, however, in these pages to enter into the merits of any tenet purely theological. It is enough to point out the opposite tendencies which

divide so naturally and so widely the two schools of opinion which are represented by Presbytery and Prelacy in Scotland. But the historical pretensions of the latter, as an existing development of its ancient spirit, and as having an intimate bearing on its ecclesiastical principles, is a matter specially connected with my present purpose. There must be no concealment or misrepresentation of that stubborn array of facts which stamp Episcopacy in Scotland, from the day when it first appeared in the Reformed Church to the Revolution, as a system destitute of every element of national life—hostile to the rights, to the institutions, to the opinions, and to the prejudices of the people.

A desperate and fruitless struggle is maintained by the zealous "Churchmen" of Scotland to represent it otherwise. They would actually have us to believe that we entirely mistake the meaning of all those sounds of struggle, of remonstrance, of battle, and of execration, which assail us at every step as we follow the march of Scottish Prelacy. It is easy to understand the feelings which prompt to this attempt, though I am astonished at the rashness of the attempt itself. It would be very desirable, no doubt, if it were possible for them, to throw some better light on the life and course of Scottish Prelacy. But I would seriously warn the Episcopal Church in Scotland from endeavouring the task. I do so for several reasons. In the first place, no religious party can associate its sympathies with such a course, without serious injury to its own character and its own reputation. By doing so, it deliberately places itself

under the strongest temptation to indulge in the worst vices of religious animosity—to be violent—unjust—untruthful. In the next place, there is a better way of removing this scandal upon their name and principles. They can repudiate the connection. They gain much, and can lose nothing, by so doing. They can retain all their distinctive, and, as I think, their vicious principles unimpaired. They may say—“It is true that the Reformation in Scotland did not retain Episcopacy; that when its name was introduced, it appeared under circumstances of corruption, and in a false and counterfeited form; that when it became genuine, by being possessed of Apostolical Succession, it was associated with the irregularities of political despotism—then with violence—then with cruel persecution. It is true, therefore, that it was never fairly represented to Scotchmen, and we are not surprised at their fanaticism having been roused against it. Nevertheless, we deem it the foundation-stone of the Christian temple. We cannot recognise as a Church any communion which refuses to build upon it—and we therefore consider ourselves the only representative of ‘The Church’ in Scotland.” This would be a straightforward, open, intelligible, reputable statement of their views—views which, with all respect to the many excellent men who hold them, I regard as the emptiest superstition.

But for Scottish “Churchmen” to cling to the desperate ambition of nationality at the expense of identifying themselves with the history of the most corrupt and mischievous religious party which ever has existed in any country—to quibble and mis-

represent as to the Episcopal character of "Superintendents," or of the Prelacy of the Regents,—or to palliate or defend the monstrous course of Scottish Episcopacy under Charles, and James II.—this is neither straightforward, nor rational, nor reputable. It must tend, too, to cast some suspicion on their confidence in those far higher claims on which they rest the exclusive "Churchism" of their Church. If those higher claims be just, they had better not be associated with other claims which are so clearly false. On all these grounds, then, the affectation of nationality had better be given up. Let them fall back upon their own independent claims. Considering the position of Episcopacy in Scotland, the principles of Priesthood, in their most stringent and repulsive form, are its natural resource. It is natural that its clergy and more zealous members—placed as they are in a country where every parish church reminds them of the final triumph of its opponent in the great struggle of the Civil Wars—should be deeply imbued with those doctrines in regard to their peculiar spiritual privileges, which, even under less provoking circumstances, must be so grateful to spiritual pride. But for the credit of those opinions, and for its own internal peace, let it not identify itself with the elder Prelacy of Scotland. Let it confess itself a branch of the Church of England. More than once has the spiritual chain, which connects it through the dark vistas of the middle age with the Twelve Apostles, had its failing links welded at the forge of Lambeth. This connection had better be remembered and

cherished—other less honourable connections had better be relinquished and forgotten. It is better surely for the credit of the Divine right of Bishops, and of Apostolical Succession, to be connected with a Church which—whatever be the blemishes in its history—has often acted a very honourable part, and now possesses a firm foundation on truth, and a firm hold on national opinion, than with one which, if it deserves the name of Church at all, stands out among all the parties of our history, as the great enemy of civil and religious liberty—as the unscrupulous advocate and employer of oppression—as one of the principal causes of the Civil Wars of Britain, and as the grievous aggravator of the miseries they occasioned.

I should neglect a very striking point of comparison between the two great currents of opinion which have flowed from Presbytery and Prelacy, as developed in Scotland, were I to omit all notice of the different aspects in which they view respectively the facts and principles of the Reformation. There is no look we can obtain of these two schools, in which we can estimate with greater truth the relative proportions of their genius—the bold, comprehensive, vigorous character of the one—the narrow, unsatisfying subtlety of the other. Look at the Reformation as Presbytery regards it, and it rises before us in all the vastness of its value—as the pulling down of a system which, on the most momentous of all subjects, was burying souls in delusion and deceit,—misinterpreting or shutting God's Word to man, misguiding man's prayers to God; as the rending of a thick veil which had been

drawn between the Worshipped and the Worshipper ; as a cleansing of Faith from the leprosy of Superstition ; in short, as the cutting out of a thousand cankers which were eating into the very heart of Christianity in the world. Look again at this great event, as the school of Prelacy regards it, and it dwindles down to a miserable contest with an Italian Priest, against the extension of his authority to Britain ! This was a very important point, no doubt, at one time. Much was gained when some men discovered that they owed no personal allegiance to the Italian Priest. It was the A, B, C of Protestant knowledge. It was a good foundation for many deeper things. It was a great thing for the Reformation when Henry VIII. discovered it,—though he was led to the discovery by the desire of divorcing one wife, and of marrying another. Nevertheless, it was a bit of truth—a bit which, when once laid hold of, dragged along with it other bits, until at last men advanced from the A, B, C, to X, Y, Z ; and from this again on to the understanding of many complex sentences, full of deep, spiritual meanings !

But though it is very satisfactory when a child is able to repeat the first letters of the alphabet, it is not at all gratifying—it is melancholy and ridiculous—to hear them repeated with emphasis and exultation by full-grown men. We can follow with the deepest interest the first—the feeblest—step of the men of the sixteenth century, in their march from Rome ; but we can feel no interest whatever in Churchmen of the present day stammering the first

accents of the Reformation. It is a spectacle quite as melancholy, though more alarming, than that of full-grown men boasting of their A, B, C. It is impossible not to see, that wherever a mere question as to the geographical extent of a particular Priest's authority enters principally, or even in any degree, into men's idea of the Reformation, the whole system of Protestant opinion is based on sand. I have said that the denial of the Bishop of Rome's spiritual sovereignty was a bit of truth. But the fact is, that *in itself* it can hardly be said even to amount to this. The mere fact of an universal Bishopric expressed no lie, and therefore, the denial of it expressed no truth, except when viewed in connection with certain principles which lay behind it. In as far as the power of the Italian Priest claimed to rest on Divine authority—and thereby involved the principle of constructive interpretations of God's Will, through the medium of tradition—in so far those claims *did* express a lie, and the denial of them did express a truth. If "Churchmen" regarded it in this point of view, there would be no objection to their condemning a principle which certainly was one of those against which the Reformation entered its protest. But when it appears that the only principle which makes the denial of the Romish claims valuable, is directly involved in other claims, which those "Churchmen" themselves advance, it becomes evident that *their* idea of the revolt from Rome forms no part whatever of the truth or the value of the Reformation.

Except as involving the vicious principle above

referred to, the spiritual jurisdiction of a central government over the visible Church was in itself no evil thing. If there is one glorious characteristic of the Christianity of the middle age, it was in that feature of wide conformity which symbolised the unity of the Spiritual Church. And this feature of conformity stood in immediate connection with the centralisation of ecclesiastical authority. It was a glorious thing to go from one end of Western Europe to another—from the harbour of Valetta, to the Fiords of Norway—from the Danube to the clustered Hebrides — and find throughout every country which lay between, one Priesthood—one Creed—one Ritual. It was a good thing to have even that faint shadow in the world, of one Lord—one Faith—one Baptism!

No mere question as to the original size of the Roman diocese, could for a moment have justified any member of this vast brotherhood in breaking its conformity. As furnishing an excuse for such a course, it was of no importance whatever whether that diocese originally comprehended the world—or only Europe—or only Italy—or only Rome—or only the gardens of the Vatican. Nothing short of a belief that the existing conformity was a conformity in error—nothing short of an independent conviction, that what was so uniformly believed was false and wrong—could have justified any man, or any country, in disturbing the repose of the visible Church. The size of the diocese of Rome is wholly beside the question. There is no religious truth expressed in the lines of geography—in the bound-

aries of nations, or in the walls of towns. *Jure Divino*, of course, there was as little authority for one Priest extending his authority beyond the walls of Rome, as for another stretching it beyond the streets of Canterbury. But the reverence—the affection—the opinions, and the habits of a large part of the Christian Church, had gradually consecrated for both those Priests, a power and a position for which these were the only, and the sufficient title ;—sufficient, I mean—not against those higher rights of the Christian people, for which, and from which alone, those Priests held their respective places—not against the right of any jot or tittle of Christian truth, to make itself heard in the family or in the Church—but against any frivolous or schismatic disturbance of existing order.

It would be a tiresome and useless task to specify the numerous forms in which such childish views of the Reformation abound in the writings of the Scottish Prelatic school. One instance, however, now before me, furnished by the “Spottiswoode Society” is so apposite that I may here mention it in passing. In the first volume of the “Spottiswoode Miscellany” there is published a letter on the ecclesiastical history of Scotland from the earliest times. The author of the paper is not known ; but it is recommended to us in a prefatory note for the “acuteness” of its remarks. On account of this, and of its quiet and matured tone, it may be taken as a very fair sample of the genius of the school.

This “Churchman” is in his native element when tracing, through the dim haze of monkish chronicles,

the first sproutings of the Church in Scotland. How, very far back indeed—in the thirteenth century—some old broken stone was found with mention of “*Locus Sancti Nicolai Episcopi*,” betokening a Pictish Bishop still farther back, no one knows how far: how, “dropping” more doubtful names, a certain St. Ringan, in the fifth century, planted a See at Whithorn, and St. Mungo another See at Glasgow: how, in the seventh century, a charter of King Egfrid is known to have begun, “I, Trumwin, Bishop of the Picts:” how there must have been a Church at Abernethy about 460, since we are told in a Pictish Chronicle “that Necton Morbet, son of Erp, brother to Durst, in whose reign St. Ringan preached, offered—‘*immolavit*’—Abernethy to God and St. Bridgid, in presence of Darludach, Abbess of Cell:” how, again there is some doubt cast on this, by its appearing elsewhere that “one of King Brude’s successors,” either “Garnard son of Dompnach, or Nethan son of Ub,” built the Abernethy Church: how a certain Palladius was sent over by Pope Celestine in 430 “*ad Scotos credentes in Christo*:” how he ordained one Servanus Bishop of the Orkneys, and Tervanus Bishop of the Picts: how he had been first in Ireland, and how, “even under the present establishment that rejects all memorials of Saints,” memory is nevertheless preserved of him, in a market called “Paddy Fair:” how, in short, ten thousand things said of old Kings, Saints and Bishops in one Legend, are to be reconciled with as many different accounts in others—such are the subjects which occupy the whole body of the Paper; and are discussed with

such an air of elaborate importance, and in such a maze of obscure, confused names, and conflicting dates, that we positively gasp for breath in wading through it.

I desire, however, not to be misunderstood. It is from no want of value for the subject, that this sense of oppression comes. It is right to dwell on the works and triumphs of an early faith, not only with a deep sense of interest, but with a deep heart of love. Wherever the first foot-prints of Christianity have fallen, and any impressions of them still remain,—these it is well to follow. Whether they are traced in the noisome catacombs of Rome, or on the fresh mountain sides of the Picts and Scots, the same reverence is always due. For my own part, strongly as I have felt from its great remains—in its glorious architecture, and its solemn works of art—how much of grandeur and reality there still remained in the Christianity of the earlier middle age—I have never been impressed with a deeper sense of what it was and did, than in those lonely spots of the western highlands, where its only memorials are, perhaps, a shapeless tombstone, or a broken cross. The shock of a great mental revolution has indeed covered them with the weeds of neglect and change. But nothing may divide our sympathies from the memory of the past. We may acknowledge with deep conviction that it was full of the good and great. We cannot look into it without feeling the presence of some gigantic virtues—faithful, earnest, devoted spirits,—unconquerably gallant hearts. We may gladly remember that we are connected with those times by facts; we should

desire to be connected by feeling, also. The first is a connection independent of our wills—a connection which death and time have not broken, but rather sealed. The other is a connection whose existence and whose value depend entirely on the character we suffer it to assume. To be right, or true, the feeling must be one, not superstitious, but discerning. It must be, not blind reverence, but intelligent respect—a respect directed to what was really good and true, not to that which was erroneous, and ended in corruption. Above all it must be conceived in a right spirit, and be employed for a proper purpose. It must spring from a spirit of love, and be controlled by a sense of truth. It must not derive its life from party prejudice. Its apparent liberality must not be secret bigotry. It must not value the graves of Saints as an armoury of offensive weapons. Its power of appreciating one age, must not come from a desire to depreciate another. It must belong, in short, to a Catholicity which is deep and true; not to a Catholicity which is artificial and false. If the love of Prelatic “Churchmen” for the middle age answered these conditions, I should honour and esteem it heartily. But when we find on what it really depends, and for what it is principally cherished, it assumes the character of a very childish passion, directed to very childish objects.

When we find, for instance, that this writer recommended by the “Spottiswoode” for “acuteness and research,” derives his chief interest in the early Christianity of Scotland from the pleasure of pronouncing the very names of See, Bishoprick, and

Bishop ; and that the moment its history no longer embraces these, his "research" is paralysed, and his interest not only abates, but ceases,—we can only regard both his production, and the school of which he learnt, with sorrow and contempt. This man, whose research can discover, through many hundred years, an old stone with "Locus Sancti Nicolai Episcopi" engraved upon it—who has a clear vision of a charter of the seventh century, beginning with "I Trumwin, Bishop of the Picts"—who can balance and compare the conflicting claims upon Abernethy Church, between "Necton Morbet, son of Erp, brother to Durst," and "Garnard, son of Dompnach," and "Nethan, son of Ub"—this man tells us that he neither "knows for certain when our Reformation began," nor "who our Reformers were." He has read, he says, "the story of those fifty years or so, from 1560, to King James VI.'s accession to the throne of England," more than once, and with all the pains he could, but he declares he "does not know what to think of the story, or what idea to form of the then Church of Scotland."

Very likely not! How can the man form any idea of the Church of Scotland then, when, according to his theories, there was no "Church" at all? In that space of time, in respect to which he says his mind is thus a blank, there were no successors of "Trumwin." The very race was totally extinct. But without "Trumwins" there is, according to his school, no "Church." The "Church" in Scotland, he tells us, is something quite distinct alike from Romanism and Presbytery. These are its two great

enemies—that is to say, it is a territorial priesthood, attacked on the one hand by those (the Presbyterians) who would suppress its being; and, on the other, by an arch-priest (the Pope), who would violate the geographical boundary of its dominions. But such a priesthood did not exist in Scotland during more than “those fifty years or so.” Those who left Romanism in 1560, did not do so on any question about the size of a diocese, or the dominions of a priesthood. They left on questions very different, and one of these was the very existence of sacerdotal power as a part of Christianity. In short, they leaped at once from Rome to Presbytery. There was no middle party standing out from both, on great questions of geography. “The Church,” therefore, as he understands it, did not exist; but not wishing to own that such a conclusion is the true consequence of his theory, this writer takes shelter under the intelligent and “acute” remark, that he really can form no idea on the subject, though he has tried very hard indeed.

But though this writer can form no idea as to what our Reformation was, we find that he has some ideas as to what it *should have been*. It is worth while to look at them, as perfect types of the genius of the school. They all cluster in narrow circles round one point—tradition. This is their mother and their nurse. They never leave her feet; and not only do they never venture on any independent flight themselves, but they cannot conceive of others doing so. Within the lists of chronicle and legend the author will tilt with any foe. Those opponents who demand a wider field, he fights in effigy. Having

pinned down Presbytery to three defences, on which Presbytery, as he knows very well, would not condescend to meet him—not one of which our Reformers probably ever heard of, and at all of which, as the grounds of their belief, they would have laughed heartily—he gallantly begins the combat. First, there is some vague old legend, that, under a certain King Donald, who lived no-one knows when, Scotland was converted by missionaries who were not Bishops. Next, there is another old legend, hardly less obscure, touching an early priesthood in Scotland called Cul-dees, and enjoying a peculiar constitution. Lastly, there is a third story, resting on an obscure passage in Bede, as to the organisation of the Iona monastery. On these three imaginary defences of Presbytery, this “Churchman” employs all the weapons of his “acuteness” and “research.” Leaving him to do so, and merely mentioning the fact as worth noticing, we next observe his equally characteristic mode of attacking Romanism. That the early Church of Scotland did not observe Romish practices, when as yet they were not Romish, because they did not exist; that the abandonment of vulgar tongues in worship, that adoration of images, that celibacy of the clergy, did not obtain in Scotland sooner than in other Christian churches; that St. Andrew was the apostle peculiarly honoured in Scotland, not St. Peter; that the Scottish clergy would not keep Easter as they did at Rome—no, not down to the seventh century; that Scotland never received an archiepiscopal pall from Rome, until she had an Archbishop who required it,—though then she pro-

bably did ; that no Roman legate can be discovered at any Scottish council until the twelfth century, though some few councils are said to have been held before ; that leave from Rome does not seem to have been asked in Scotland, previous to the erection of a new bishoprick, until the year 1200 ; that Scotland, in short, did not become Popish, except in company with other nations ; and that therefore she must have had a perfect right to cease being so when she chose ; —such are the grounds on which this writer would have rested, and does rest, the defence of the Reformation ; such are the grounds on which that ideal “ Church ” would stand, which is equally distant from Presbytery and Rome.

The same character appears in some practical remarks he proceeds to make respecting those “ fifty years or so,” during which no such Church existed, and which therefore puzzle him so much. First, he says, he thinks it was a very wrong thing to murder Cardinal Beaton. It would be difficult to dispute this. But what has this murder to do with the Reformation ? It was not the cause, nor was it, except very indirectly, the effect of that religious change. It would be much more relevant to remark, in reference to the English Reformation, that it was a very wrong thing of Henry VIII. to divorce and behead his wives, in order to marry others. These crimes stood in immediate connection with the change of religion in that country ; whereas Beaton’s murder stood in no such connection with the same change in Scotland. This remark therefore corroborates the confession this writer makes, that, on

our Reformation and Reformers, his ideas are in a chaotic state.

But, secondly, he remarks on the lamentable desolation of cathedrals, monasteries, and other religious houses. On this subject I have only a few words to say. The current of the Reformation, though that of a deep and noble stream, ran turbidly in its heady course. It eddied, and rushed, and foamed. Its surface was covered with the rubbish and the bubbles of its own passion. It is easy for us now, who sit by the side of its clear and subsided waters, to remark on the violence of their former aspect; and if we do so with intelligence, it is profitable and right. But instead of attracting our attention as one of the first and most important points in the character of the Reformation, this ought to stand as the very last and least. When spoken of, as it is mentioned here, it reflects not on the deep realities of the Reformation, but on the shallowness of those who look at it. I have already expressed my own feeling for the remains of the middle age. I have enjoyed them too much, where they still exist, not to regret them, where they have been destroyed. I can estimate the source from which they sprang, and the great purposes which they unquestionably served. Before the ruins of Dryburgh, or Melrose, or Iona, we may well exclaim with Wordsworth—

“ Alas ! the sanctities combined
By Art, to unsensualise the mind ! ”

But we must remember, at the same time, that they had outlived their effect. They may have originated

in a deep spirit of devotion,—I think they must; they may have served to maintain it in many souls,—I believe they did. But they had not continued to “unsensualise the mind.” Christianity had been darkened in the gloom of aisles; it had been clouded by the smoke of censers; it had been made to abide in temples, and pass through the hands of Levites. It was supposed to have altars, and sacrifices, and priests. It had been tabernacled in figures of stone, and wood, and wax; it had been materialised—sensualised. The ideas of superstition were bound up with its symbols—the idolatry with its monuments. For their own sakes we may regret the destruction of the latter. But if any thing shall lead us to believe that a distinction which was not made in fact, cannot be made in principle—if ever we shall see the same forms attracting the same ideas—we must cease to feel like Wordsworth, in being called to act like Knox.

One more of this writer's acute remarks, and I shall leave him. The old papers, charters, &c. of the Church were in great part destroyed at the Reformation, along with the monasteries which contained them. This, he thinks, was a fatal error, and an irreparable loss. If these had been preserved, it might have been proved to demonstration that Scotland was not originally part of the diocese of Rome. “This,” he says, “had been a more effectual way of reasoning” than the one actually adopted—which was nothing but the vulgar method of reasoning from the Scriptures. The Papists, he says, had quite as good a right as our Reformers had “to take liberties

with the Scriptures"—"so that not much good could be well expected from such an endless way of wrangling." But if the old chartularies of the monks had been preserved, they would have settled the question, he thinks, at once. And as proof of this, he has discovered a very notable fact—viz., that the only chartularies saved, being those of Glasgow, were carried into France by Archbishop Beaton, and that ever since the time when those documents entered her dominions, that Church has made a noble stand on the national or geographical principle. "What helps then," exclaims this "Churchman" in his enthusiasm, "might have been expected from all such records, of which our Church had great plenty, if, before the cathedrals, &c. were destroyed, learned men had taken them out, and examined them, and regulated their then Reformation according to them!"

Learned men, if they had done so, might have found some very curious and interesting things—in their way. Some of the lost chartularies have been recovered. Their contents are known. Their registry of rent-rolls, endowments, bequests; their legends, superstitions, and disputes; their miscellaneous jottings of every sort and kind—these illustrate many things which it is curious and interesting to know. But I need hardly inform my readers, that, as a basis for Reformed Doctrine, they are about as valuable as those other documents of the same kind which have engrossed this writer's "acuteness and research."

However unimportant, from their very childishness, such views as these may seem, they suggest some very serious thoughts. It is a fact full of meaning.

that a writer, praised by the Scottish Prelatic school for his acuteness and research, should gravely speak of direct appeals to Scripture as a less secure—a more disputable—basis for a Reformed Church, than monkish chartularies. Such nonsense, it may be thought, it is hardly worth while to notice. But we must remember this—it is the actual and probably the natural result of certain principles, with which a large party of our own time and country are thoroughly imbued. As such it demands attention. It shows at how wide an angle those principles diverge from the straight lines of truth and reason,—how they entice the mind into passages where it has no room to work,—how they cramp and emasculate its powers. It is a warning to beware of any principles which require for their support, or which even tempt to, an abandonment of the broad, open ground of Scriptural argument. Any opinions which naturally suggest a barrier being put between the Word which God has sent, and the reason which God has given, must be a delusion and a snare. It is perfectly true that there is room for wide divergence from the truth amongst opinions which profess a Scriptural foundation. It is perfectly true that from the absence of prayer, humility, and devotion—from the presence of pride, wilfulness, and passion, men do err, and will err, in interpreting the Word. Help,—guidance *is* required. But from whom shall we ask it? This is the question. From monks? From Chartularies? From impalpable unfixed tradition? From a priesthood, past or present? These have been tried already. They were blind leaders of the blind. If

they did not cause, at least they did not prevent, the grossest corruptions which had diseased Christianity in the world. They have received the sentence of Belshazzar. They have been weighed and found wanting. Even "Churchmen" must admit that they did not prevent that most dreadful of all corruptions—the extension of the Roman diocese.

It must be confessed, however, to this school, that there is no necessary or logical connection between the Papal supremacy, and the principles of priesthood and tradition. There is nothing in the nature of Italy or of Rome which should compel them to centre there. The Tiber rolls through a wide and pestilential waste before it joins the sea; but we know that malaria may exist in other countries having no connection with the Tiber or its plains. In like manner there are certain desolating and pernicious principles in the theology of the Roman Church, but we are certain they may exist and flourish in Churches which have nothing to do with Rome. We have been accustomed to associate with her name, those vices of religious opinion against which Huss, and Wickliffe, and Luther, and Melancthon, and Zuingle, and Calvin, and Knox, entered their several protests in various countries of the world. But we have no reason to believe that they may not, in future ages, be connected with some other place, and spread from some other pulpit. I agree, therefore, logically speaking, with the school of prelatic "Churchmen," that they may consistently condemn the very name of Romanist and Pope, and yet retain all the principles which have distinguished their past, and which are equally

prominent in their present, course. Nevertheless I hold it to be equally true that those principles are Romanist;—that is to say, that they involve the same falsities which lie at the root of Romanism. And this I must also say, that men holding those principles deeply—men thoroughly possessed by those tendencies of opinion which constitute their vice, and who refuse to be Romanists, only, or principally, or in any degree, on notions which I have called geographical,—that is on notions as to the original size of the Roman diocese,—stand on ground as narrow as a needle's point. I do not mean to say that it is not logically defensible; for I think it is. But they may as well—they *ought* to—leave it as not being worth the trouble and the evils of defence.

This I take to be the true philosophy of those conversions which have sprung in England from a revival of "Church Principles." I do not believe that those men who have enrolled themselves members of the Roman Church, had any intention, at first, of doing so. I believe that though imbued with the same principles which have been accidentally associated with the Italian City, they nevertheless distinctly saw that they had no necessary connection with it. They meant to stand apart, on denials of the Pope's supremacy, and other denials as logical, and as valueless. But when the development of those principles in their minds, opened their eyes to the identity between them and the principles which Rome had so long and so wonderfully upheld, they felt no inclination, and they had no heart to resist her charms. I do not wonder. It was hard to

stand where they stood, and on a narrow point of logic, or on a false pride of nationality, to refuse to go to her. They had been led, as it were, blindfold from England, and on the Janiculum their eyes were opened! They were Englishmen; they owed no obedience to the See of Rome. But who, in such a presence, could dwell on this? They looked down on that wonderful city, which, from those heights, tells so well her history in her face. They saw her seated on a throne of ruins, but grasping in her living hand that spiritual sceptre, which has survived so many ages full of the births and deaths of nations! They saw her classic remains, her civic palaces, and her priestly domes,—the latter alone untouched by dilapidation or decay. They saw her as one mighty symbol translating their very hearts. Her power was on them—the memory of what she had been—the sense of what she is. It was needless, it was wrong, to struggle farther; they bowed their heads and their souls before her, and passed under the yoke of Rome.

Protestants, then, must watch with a dragon's eye any professing defence of the Reformation which, in reality, saps and undermines it. They who feel that among the falsehoods against which the Reformation entered its protest, the universal bishopric of Rome is not worthy to be even named, may well suspect any religious party whose principles convert a point, in itself so trivial, into one of prominent importance. Great tenacity on this indicates a letting slip of deeper things. True it is, that "Church Principles" of the kind we have been examining are

compatible with, and frequently involve the strongest enmity against the claims of the Romish Church. These touch the independence of a territorial priesthood. Accordingly symptoms may often be observed among "Churchmen" of a very bitter spirit against the Papacy. I have heard it seek expression in the strange conceit that the Romish Church in Britain is in a state of "schism." Scottish Prelacy, therefore, though its opinions rest on the same errors, may not be Romanist in the etymological meaning of the word. It may feel no temptation to be so. It may never have advanced so far as the Janiculum; or if it have, it may stand there shouting that it is Scotch—that St. Andrew is its Apostle—not St. Peter. In the same spirit, and on the same principle, it may refuse to be even English. It may deny all connection with the school of Oxford. This is all very well—in its way. Patriotism is a virtue in its proper place. But as the prominent feature in the character of a religious party, it cannot be any virtue, and it may be the symptom of a real vice. Even if it were genuine—which in the case of this party it, of course, cannot be—the love of nationality must be considered as simply indifferent. Religious Truth includes no idea of country; nor does the idea of country include any Religious Truth. Neither the Tweed, nor the Channel, nor the Alps, have any meaning, or any existence in the World of Faith.

CHAPTER II.**DISCUSSION ON THE PRINCIPLE OF PRIESTHOOD, WITH
REFERENCE TO THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.**

THE subjects on which the principles of Presbytery and Prelacy stand contrasted in the preceding review of each, are of no mere local interest. For good or for evil, for a blessing or a curse to human society, our opinions in regard to them are, perhaps, more powerful than in regard to any other. The nature—the constitution—the powers—the rights of the visible Church of Christ—whom it includes—who represent its voice—how far its judgments reach—these are questions, whose unspeakable importance no language can possibly exaggerate. Deeply affecting principles of public policy and of private duty, they pursue us in a thousand forms into all the practical affairs of government and of life. Opening up principles which take hold of the religious affections, and through them at once inflame the passions and subdue the intellect, they are at all times liable to exert the most powerful and pervading influence on the whole condition of the world.

The power exercised by false opinions in regard to them over Christian civilisation, has surely been marked enough. One great distinctive principle

respecting them lies at the root of that vast religious system, under which the nations of western Europe were gradually gathered, and lay for many hundred years. It largely contributed to throw that great broad shadow on the history of our race, the last margin of which lies now more than three centuries behind us, and to which men point and say "those were the Dark Ages!" And why were they dark? Christianity was there,—and human hearts were there—and faith—and earnestness—and piety, greater, far greater, than according to its knowledge. Why, then, were they dark? Why do they appear so even when compared with the amenities of Pagan civilisation, and the noble efforts of Pagan intellect? Why did the flame of mental energy flicker and almost die under the dominion of Christ's faith? How was it that though elevating the character and the knowledge of the individual, it yet seemed to check the progress of the race? How was it, above all, that when intellect revived, it sought no alliance with Christian faith? In one direction almost alone did the spirit of the Church strike out a new path for genius. It seized with energy on the forms of Art; and the creations of Giotto and of Raphael have deeper meanings than those of Phidias. But when we leave the ecclesiastical buildings and paintings of the Italian cities, to examine in the piazza, or the palace, the source of that high civic refinement and intellectual cultivation which made them shine so brightly in the middle age, we find ourselves no longer in company with religion. Rather the reverse. And especially at that period of their history, the most

glorious of all, when they lighted again the torch of knowledge, they took their fire from the old lamps of Greece and Rome. Along with the discovery of Pagan books there arose a burning admiration of Pagan mind; and the age of the Medici was not more remarkable for its liberality and refinement, than for the licence of its morals and its faith. On their death-beds men seemed less occupied with the revelations of Christ, than with the guesses of the Sage: and those last conversations and requests of the great Cosmo, which, in a former age, might have been spoken to a Priest on the founding of a monastery, or the building of a church, were addressed to a Platonist philosopher on the discourses of the Academy, and the translation of Xenocrates on Death!

So impetuously did the current of men's minds set in this direction, that it almost seemed as if the gods of Heathenism had again awakened, and men were crowding in to worship in a rebuilt Pantheon. Christianity—at least, those who undertook to represent its interests—showed symptoms of alarm; and who has not heard of the celebrated Monk of Florence, who caused to be burnt in the great square of the city, all such works of genius or of art as bore the mark of Heathenism? If Julian the Apostate had seen this *auto da fe* of SAVONAROLA, he might perhaps have fancied that the great contest of his own days had been revived, or was still at issue—he might have imagined that the worship of his fathers was still maintaining a living contest with the exclusive claims of the new Religion. Since the light of ancient



learning had finally set, it may be said that—with a few individual exceptions, which are the more luminous from the obscurity by which they are surrounded—men's minds had lain asleep,—and now when they were again awakened, they seemed to be going too far for Christianity to follow. This is a strange history. There is nothing to account for it in Christianity itself; but there is much to account for it in the principles of that "Church," or Priesthood, to whom its interests had been entrusted, and by whom these had been betrayed. There are none, surely, of the noblest words of Socrates or Plato which ought to have struck a Christian with the excited admiration of novelty or surprise. If the realities of his own religion had been truly represented to his mind, the divinest thoughts of those philosophers must have seemed but faint outlines of truths, which were the familiar knowledge of his own daily life. It was a strange time when Christians, comforting themselves in the evils of life, or seeking consolation at its close, could choose their text from the treatise "*DE SUMMO BONO*." Surely the disciple who had sat on the Mount of Olives had no need of wandering to the grove of Athens.

It is then, indeed, as Mr. Hallam truly says, "an interesting question, what were the causes of this enthusiasm for antiquity, which we find in the beginning of the fifteenth century." The interest of this question, however, seems to turn rather on the sceptical tendency this enthusiasm took, at the revival of learning, and on the state of matters it indicates to have existed before, than on the mere

fact of its existence. For this, I believe, there was a cause deeper seated than those to which Mr. Hallam points—the fall of the House of Suabia, the consequent revival of Italian nationality, or the power of ancient recollections. The truth is, that Christianity itself had been for centuries becoming more and more obscured, under a shrivelling superstition. The whole spirit of religion had gradually become more and more objective in its character—more directed to the maintenance of the outward Church, in its dogmatic and secular power, than to the nourishment of devout affections in the heart. Dry, husky, ceremonial notions of the nature of Christ's Church had, day by day, and year by year, been bringing in notions more and more unworthy of Christian doctrine, and of Christian duty. When Priests constituted the Church, rites soon came to constitute religion. And then, at last, when gross personal corruption broke down even that respect which rested on ignorance and superstition, what hold was there left on faith? “The greater part of literature in the Middle Ages,” says the same eminent historian whom I have just quoted, “at least from the twelfth century, may be considered as artillery levelled against the clergy.” When we remember, then, what the clergy were in the religion of those times, can we wonder that men who ceased to be ignorant, yet remained in the outward limits of a Church which they despised, too often ceased to be believers also? And before Protestantism arose, to vindicate the honour of Christianity, by reconciling faith with enlightenment and knowledge, what wonder that minds of the more

earnest cast drank in, with transport, the great, deep thoughts of heathen intuition? Contrasted with the dry forms of a ritual belief, or the interested dogmas of a corrupted priesthood, they must have seemed real indeed, and fresh as the dew of Hermon!

The notions prevalent at this time, in reference to the duties and interests of Christianity, were low and formal to a degree, which is indeed a dreadful satire on the system from which they sprung. We see it in everything said or done, even by the most enlightened men, and with the most serious purpose. No better illustration can be given than that supplied to us in the history of one, who, in being the type of his Order, was in no small degree the cause of the Reformation. When young GIOVANNI DE' MEDICI, having been already four years a Cardinal, had just entered Rome at seventeen years of age, to pay his respects to the Head of the Church, his illustrious father addressed to him a letter of exhortation and advice. He speaks to him, indeed, of piety and purity of life; for no amount of practical corruption had silenced these common acknowledgments of the Christian profession. But piety, in the language even of the more serious minded of that time, has very much the tone which the same word had of old in the lips of a religious Platonist. Lorenzo de' Medici was not an irreligious man. Throughout life, at least at intervals, he cherished naturally sentiments of devotion,—performed duly the ceremonies of the Church,—and died kissing a gorgeous crucifix. But when we turn to the specific ideas to which this great and

vigorous mind was tied down by the spirit of "The Church," how shallow and perfunctory do they seem! The extravagant and undignified raptures with which he had hailed the appointment of his boy, at thirteen years of age, to the highest dignity but one in the hierarchy of the Church, had now subsided. He himself was very near his death, and was giving his most thoughtful and matured advice on the duties of the Christian ministry. "It gave me very great pleasure to learn," says the letter to which I have referred, "that in the course of the past year you had frequently, of your own accord, gone to communion and confession, nor do I conceive that there is any better way of obtaining the favour of Heaven, than by habituating yourself to the performance of these and similar duties. This appears to me the most suitable and useful advice which, in the first instance, I can possibly give you." Then,—after informing him, rather incidentally, as if of a matter perfectly acknowledged, and admitting of no dispute, that that city to which he had repaired—Rome—whose name represented the unity of the Church, whose sovereign was a Priest, the Vicar of Christ on earth, whose council were Priests, almost whose population was Priests—was a "sink of all iniquity,"—he proceeds to tell him how he was to maintain his dignity in the temptations of such a place. And in reference to the special obligations of the high station he had attained, characteristic advice is given. The young Cardinal is addressed as now a member of that most important body from which the supreme head of Christendom is chosen. The prominent idea of this

position is that of a Prince in a vast organised Government, which was called "The Church," whose interests were in future to be his, and the support of whose dominion was to be the first consideration of his life. "You are now devoted to God and the Church; on which account you ought to aim at being a *good ecclesiastic*, and to show that you prefer the honour and state of the Church, and of the Apostolic See, to every other consideration."

Nor, according to the understanding he had of the nature of "The Church," and of the duties of a "good ecclesiastic," can GIOVANNI be accused of having neglected his father's counsel. As a member of the Sacred College he was ever faithful to the interests of the Roman Priest—not refusing to assist by his presence and advice even the fierce predatory ambition of Julius II. He was indeed less versed in the doctrines of Christianity than in the songs and myths of profane literature: "his house more often re-echoed to the sprightly harmony of concerts than to the solemn sounds of devotion."* But even in the greatest embarrassments of his polished dissipation, he had resources to spend in the founding or support of ecclesiastical institutions. And when at last the Cardinal de' Medici reached the highest elevation in "The Church," he pursued the same course with ability and zeal. Under that happy conviction which his order had so long maintained, that the interests of his own sacerdotal dominion were the interests of Christ's Church, he

* Roscoe's Life of Leo. X.

intrigued, and fought, and thundered with arms, both secular and spiritual, against those who did injury to the "Spouse of God." Nor, in attending to the "honour" and "interests" of "The Church," did he forget that to which his father had also alluded—her "state." To this he contributed with all the splendour of his munificence, and the judgment of his cultivated taste. He did everything in short for the interests of "The Church," which consisted with his idea of its nature,—everything except that which a private friend, as if in irony, complimented him for doing ;—"Tu vero, non parietes ipsos, non contignationes, non cæteras partes ædificii sanctas tectasque reddes, sed religionem, sed castitatem morum, sed pietatem pristinam, restitues." But besides the want of those higher excellencies to which this flattering correspondent alludes, there was in the conduct of this Priest, as in that of all the vast body over which he presided, one deep and fatal fault. He did not know what Christ's Church was. He totally misunderstood the very meaning of the word. And this misunderstanding had been going on for several hundred years. His Order, in raising the edifice of "The Church," had been sapping the foundations of the truth. And now it was his destiny to sum up this long course of error, as if by a parable, in one monstrous, yet not unprecedented, act. To build St. Peter's, he sold Indulgence. Suddenly the scales fell from the eyes of a large part of Christendom, and men discovered that the Priesthood was not "The Church." Thus under the Pontificate of LEO X. the effect of sacerdotal principles respecting the nature

and powers of the Christian Church, had in several directions reached their full development. The dignified worldliness, or the learned indifference of a Medici, was indeed less scandalous than the brutal vices of a Borgia. But it was time surely for Luther to thunder his protest, when the sceptic had already silently recorded *his*.

And there is no circumstance, perhaps, connected with the Reformation, which happened more directly than another under the good providence of God, than that it was effected in the greater part of Europe, not under the sanction, but in despite of, the existing powers of Church and State. Most fortunate, indeed, that a resolute private monk—not a Council of Bishops—set his single hand to the work of reformation! If it had been otherwise, some abuses might have been removed, and all grosser scandals at least temporarily suppressed. But the root from which all those abuses had gradually grown—the principle which had enabled such scandals to exist in the Church of Christ, would have remained untouched—unreformed. Before Luther and Tetzel—the spark and the powder—had yet been brought together, the Council of the Lateran had touched with its respectful hand, the more hideous deformities of the existing system. It had warned the clergy against being Platonist or sceptical in their theology, and openly immoral in their lives. But it had closed its sessions, as such Councils of Priests usually did, by pronouncing excommunication against those who should venture to canvass its decisions. And even if National Councils had entered into rebellion against

the unity of sacerdotal government, the result might not have been much more advantageous for the interests of the truth. The claims of Priesthood might have disowned the Primacy of St. Peter, and maintained a noxious independence in every Archbishopric in the world. St. Andrew, or others of his brethren, would have been made to play the same part on a small scale, with St. Peter on a large one. This would not have served the purpose required by the interests of Christianity. There was need of a thorough and total breaking up of the existing system. There was need of the Reformers being separated from the Priesthood, so that they could as little claim its powers or its descent, as they could tolerate its dominion. Without this revolution, vital religion could not have separated itself from superstition, or maintained its power over minds roused to energy and thought. Without it, above all, there was no escape from those "Church Principles," under the reign of which the whole spirit of religion had become ecclesiastical and shrivelled.

This is the value of those accidents of outward circumstances which, as in the case of Scotland, severed so many of the Reformers absolutely from the sanction of authority, whether of Priests or Sovereigns, and which gave to Protestant Christianity that appearance of upstart novelty pointed to by Romanists as its condemnation and disgrace. But thanks to that crashing severance which rent the whole tissue of those Sacerdotal principles under which the human mind had entered the shadows of a great eclipse! There was no other security, I

firmly believe, for the permanence of that reform which Christianity required; and there is no security now, I firmly believe also, against its being again invaded by the same corruptions, wherever those principles have possession of the mind. It is vain to deal separately with the individual errors, in doctrine or practice, of the Roman Church. They all cluster round one succulent and hidden stalk of inexhaustible fertility. Whoever has entered into argument with the more able controversialists of that communion, well knows that it is not on any isolated points that they rest the defence of their system, as that representing Catholic truth; for every specific corruption, whether of doctrine or of practice, explanations and concessions are ready in abundance which, if not satisfactory, are at least elusive. But there is one broad fundamental ground on which they take up their stand, and which they well know how to fortify and to defend. "He understood," says Bishop Burnet, in speaking of the unfortunate Jesuit Coleman, who fell a victim to popular fanaticism under Charles II.,—"He understood the art of managing controversies, chiefly that great one of the authority of the Church." THAT GREAT ONE—there is much meaning in these words of Burnet. A great controversy, it is, indeed!—and one to which many others seemingly more important are, in truth, subordinate.

Admit the sacerdotal theory of the nature and authority of "The Church," and we admit that from which the whole system of Romanism has been a gradual and natural development. It is possible,

certainly, to maintain a successful defence against many of the specific forms of error which have belonged to the Papacy. But even this defence we have to maintain with arms, on the efficiency of which it is not safe to risk the high interests involved. Brought into ground where reason has no room to work, the fight becomes one of subtilty, doubtful in its progress, and at best but unsatisfactory in its issue. Obscure facts of history—still more obscure memories of tradition—and doubtful passages of possibly-misreported Fathers, such are the ruinous positions for which we have to keep up the most laborious contention. But are these fit defences for the citadels of doctrinal Truth? Even if some, by dint of great tenacity of purpose, succeed in maintaining them, do we not feel that others, less skilful or less determined, must infallibly be driven out? This, then, is one grand objection against the principles of Priesthood—that though despite of them, the learned and the acute may possibly maintain themselves in purity of faith, they rob the great mass of mankind of all security against the gradual but steady growth of error and corruption. If the voice of a visible government of Priests be invested with the authority of “The Church,” men will accept, and ought logically to accept, that voice as it comes to them *in their own days*. They have no time,—no opportunity,—and on those principles, no right,—to appeal from its present teaching, to its teaching fifteen or sixteen centuries ago. Divines living in the quiet courts of Oxford may defend their Orthodoxy against “The Church” of the sixteenth, by quoting “The Church”

of the third or fourth century. But granting that on their own theory this appeal is open to "Churchmen," it is clear that it is one which the great majority of the human race neither can nor will make ; and therefore that if the Truth is to be maintained at all, its interests must be trusted to some more open, and sufficient plea.

But this is not the only radical objection to the sacerdotal theory of the nature and authority of "The Church." Not only is it one which removes all security against corruption, but it is one which positively induces and involves it. The grossest practical idolatry which we may see in every Oratory and Chapel and Church in Italy, is but the last development of the subtle spirit which animates the sacerdotal idea of "The Church." The poor ignorant peasant who there falls down before a waxen doll, dressed in frocks of tinsel, is but the coarse representative of the more refined idolater who bows to the mystic authority of an immemorial priesthood, calling it "The Church" of God. Such principles, I willingly admit, do not interfere with earnest personal piety, nor discourage a solemn and devotional spirit. They did not do so when their power was greatest—in the darkest time of the "dark ages"—and they do not do so now. But the capital charge against the whole system on which those principles are founded is, not that it checks, but that it misdirects devotion. Its mystic symbolism and its Levitical Priesthood seem rather to add intensity to its religious feelings, in proportion as it gives visible embodiment to the objects of worship. But in the same proportion,

likewise, it introduces into the services of Christianity, a foreign element of such corrosive power that purity of faith, and with it, purity of practice, surely, though insensibly decline.

Against this power the mere restraint of Creeds and Articles are, as we have lately seen, of little value. Such barriers are too pervious to confine elements so subtle. Nor is there anything mysterious in the influence exerted by the "Church Principles" of Priesthood. The mind which is imbued with them is already entered on the course which has led, and must lead, to grosser degrees of error. Forms and symbols have already caught the mental eye, and rivetted its attention. The outward and the nominal is taking the place of the inward and the real. Symbolism is growing into Idolatry. The transition is easy and often imperceptible. We have only to cherish the natural emotions of reverence, without a corresponding exercise of the reasoning power in choosing the objects of their worship, and by the most natural and certain process, our Faith is converted into Superstition. The laws of our material nature have, naturally, power enough over the conceptions of our spirits. We need not help them to be more material than they incline to be. Idolatry, strange to say, was the besetting sin even of that peculiar people who heard the voice of the Living God.

It has been necessary to convey spiritual truth to man in language which his human nature could read and understand; and two great methods have been adopted to convey it to him. Under the Old

Dispensation there was the language of symbols; under the New, there is the language of facts, which at once interpret the symbols,—fulfil,—and end them. The services of the one were typical and prophetic—typical of spiritual meanings,—prophetic of events to come. The services of the other are only suggestive and commemorative,—commemorative of events which have come to pass,—suggestive of all that those events procured and did. The First Dispensation required a Priesthood, not merely as the mechanical performer of its rites, but as itself one of its most important symbols. But in the Second Dispensation this symbolism has been done away, because it has been fulfilled. And the Priesthood, among the rest, has been summed up and ended. There is no more need of sacrifice; the work and the office of those who were wont to offer it, are no more. Christianity is not a Parable; it is a History. There is a corresponding difference, therefore, in the object of its rites. It is their purpose to remind us of facts, and by so doing to keep alive that frame of mind which God requires of us, when we do remember them. We are not called to exercise faith in them; but they call us to exercise faith in things which they bring to mind, not so much symbolically as commemoratively. There is danger enough surely that the mere performance of rites should occupy that place in our religion, which is due only to the use we make of them. But how much is that danger increased when we systematically exaggerate the importance, not merely of the rites, but of what may be called the accidents of their administration!

To expect spiritual blessings from the efficacy of a rite is perilous enough. It *must* take us very near the edge of our Christian faith,—it may take us into that ritual idolatry which lies wholly outside the boundary. But if, advancing still farther in this direction, in which we are naturally inclined to go, we interpose between ourselves and the efficacy of the rite, the efficacy of a ceremonial Priesthood, we indeed give ourselves a tremendous impetus down the steep descent which has led, and must lead, to the coarsest idolatry of Rome.

For two reasons, therefore, the Sacerdotal theory of the nature of "The Church" tends to corrupt the Faith. First, because it commits its purity to a power which controls the exercise of reason, and is not worthy of the trust. Secondly, because in so committing it, we allow a principle essentially at variance with Christian truth, and having an inevitable tendency to obscure it more and more.

It is in their connection and tendency, then, rather than in themselves, that there is cause for serious alarm in such views as I have noticed in those Scottish "Churchmen." The mere individual tenet which seems uppermost in their mind, that which they repeat in every form of assumption, of passion, and of spleen—that religious communions destitute of Prelatic Priesthood with powers resting on descent, are not members of "The Church"—might be passed over as not deserving any serious remark. Taken by itself, it might be set down as one of those fanatic growths of party zeal, which are common, more or less, with all religious bodies :—as on a level,

for instance, with the position we have seen held by a very different communion—that any limitation on the absolute freedom of its Assemblies in ruling ecclesiastical affairs, is an infringement of the “Crown rights of the Redeemer.” In one respect, indeed, the latter tenet, if not more extravagant, is at least more manifestly the child of passion than the other. It is held by men who profess to lay down no dogmas, which the express words of Scripture do not directly warrant: whereas the “Churchman” confessedly appeals to another source, at least as a medium of constructive interpretation. But this is the very fact which indicates the much more formidable nature of the Prelatist’s extravagance. It is not merely the froth of party zeal, or the verdict of excited religious passions. The tenet referred to does not, and cannot, stand alone. It is but one utterance of deep and settled principles, which underlie the whole breadth of their religious system. And the tendencies of that system on the individual mind are almost as marked as its historical effect on the mind of Christendom. Without again recurring to the practical proof which late events in England have so abundantly afforded, it is impossible to read such productions as I have noticed in the “Spottiswoode Society” and others of the same school, without feeling that we are in company with men, over whom the great principles of the Reformation have no certain hold.

In the system of this school we meet with bits and fragments of the truth, but so torn from their natural connection that their character is changed,

and most of their value lost. The value to be put on the consent of the good and great of early times, on unity in doctrine, on authority in government ;—the power of ritual observance in keeping awake devotion ;—the dangers of mere intellectualism in faith, of individual will in practice ;—these and other principles of a kindred nature, all true when not swollen so as to displace others equally true, form all that is best and most attractive, in the opinions of the school. But all these, most of them springing from what may be called the natural affections of the soul, were cherished with great intensity of feeling, in the most corrupted times of the Roman Church. There is not one of them but may minister, if idolised, and that easily, to the grossest superstition. When reverence for antiquity, for instance, leads a man to recommend Chartularies as a fitter basis for the Reformation than the Bible, we may expect any degradation of the Faith in *him*. This is a gross instance, certainly. But throughout the writings of the school, there is evidence that in its religious system, the reasoning perceptions are in subordination to affections which they ought to rule,—retaining subtlety, but losing grasp. And wherever this is the case, all security against the spread of error is gone. The sentinels are asleep at the gates of truth.

Protestants have been wont to believe that the errors of Romanism are incompatible with knowledge and enlightenment. The truth of this position has been ably combated by a great living writer, who has shown, from the loss of ground which Protestantism

has sustained since its first impetuous advance, that this opinion cannot be confidently relied on. And indeed, when we consider what a separate domain from every other department of human meditation, is that of religious faith, we can see how it is that great powers and great acquirements of mind have co-existed, and do co-exist, with abject submission to corrupted dogmas. Let reason be as powerful as it may, its powers are of no value where it is not allowed to enter. Reason ought not to rebel against authority, where itself is unable to arrive at truth; but reason *must* choose between false authorities and true; and if in forbidding it to do the first, men forbid it also to do the second, we can understand how the greatest secular learning may co-exist with the greatest religious superstition. For these reasons, I look with alarm upon opinions which confound the Priesthood with the Church, and lay greater stress on the authority of tradition, than on logical interpretation of those writings, which are at once the earliest history, and the highest authority of the Christian Church.

I cannot bring these pages to a close without noticing a distinction which "Churchmen" very frequently draw, with great confidence, between the Scotch Reformation, and the English. Had it occurred only in such publications as those of the "Spottiswoode Society," I should have left it among the many sayings of that learned body, which are more amusing for arrogance, than remarkable for acuteness. But as it is one which I have frequently heard stated in society by men of great ability, and

in an oracular manner, as if admitting of no dispute, it may be well to examine it in passing. The English Reformers, it is said, did not leave the Church: they only cast off its pollutions. Whereas the Scotch Reformers separated themselves altogether from the Church, and started, as it were, anew.

Now, looking upon this assertion merely as expressing, and intended to express, the peculiar dogma of Prelatic Churchmen, as to the necessity of their hereditary Priesthood to the being of "The Church," the truth of that dogma being assumed, then, of course, it is so far admissible—not as the statement of a fact, but as the assertion of an opinion. So understood, it simply amounts to this—"The English Reformers, in conducting the religious change in that country, maintained Episcopal Priesthood. But that Priesthood is essential to the being of the Church. The Scotch Reformers rejected it. Therefore, *in our opinion*, whilst the former remained in the Church, the latter left it." Granting the premises, of course, the conclusion follows. But without proof of the premises, the conclusion is a mere assertion,—and one which, when stated as a fact, or used as the basis of an argument, Presbyterians must, of course, ridicule and despise. Yet, strange to say, it is frequently so employed. Do "Churchmen" wish to meet the Romanist charge against Protestants, of the sin of schism? At once they have recourse to this assertion, as having the double advantage of covering themselves, and rebuking other bodies of the Reformed. "We did not separate from the Church. The English Reformation maintained the

authority of the Church, and employed it to shake off the corruptions which Rome had introduced. We speak only of ourselves. We cannot defend the Scotch Reformation on the same ground. John Knox, we confess, separated himself and his people wholly from the Church, setting up a system of his own. You may charge *him* with the sin of schism if you choose ; but we have nothing to do with him." Or again, do Churchmen argue against those, who faithfully interpreting their own tendencies, have lately left them, and rejoined "The Church?" "Beware," they say, "how you leave us, and go to Rome. It is schismatical in you to do so. For it was not schismatical in us to leave Rome, and constitute ourselves as we now are. *We* are not like other Protestants. *We* referred back to the Church before Rome corrupted her. They did not do so. They rejected the authority of the Church. With *them* you really would be beyond the pale of the Church. But in leaving *us* you must be led by pride of intellect, or other deceiving passions of the mind." In all these forms, for these and other similar purposes, I have heard this favourite assumption repeated over and over again. It is a sort of monomania with a certain party, recurring on every occasion.

There is, however, just one unfortunate circumstance connected with this favourite assertion, and that is that it has no foundation whatever in historical fact—in short, that it is NOT TRUE. It is not true that the Scotch Reformers, in what they rejected at the Reformation, had no respect to the authority of

the Church; neither is it true that the English Reformers professed to have that authority for half that accident obliged them to retain. The English Reformers, and the Scotch Reformers, proceeded upon precisely the same idea—that they ought to revert to what the Church originally was, before its government, and its doctrine, became corrupted. And if, in the result, the two Reformations arrived at different conclusions as to what its system had been and ought to be, it was not because Presbytery refused to appeal to Apostolic history and example; but rather because—more anxious to do so than English Prelacy—it refused to form its opinion from any other source than those earliest writings, in which the Apostles tell what their Master ordered, and what themselves did.

It is possible,—quite possible,—that the Scotch Reformers may have erred in some opinions as to matters of fact, on which, as derived from those writings, they built their Ecclesiastical system. This is possible, because those matters of fact are hardly more than alluded to in the Scriptures,—much being left to inference,—so much that Prelacy applies to subsequent and less authoritative writings, in order to support its own conclusions. But there is one thing hardly possible—that thing, nevertheless, on which the “Churchman’s” pretensions rest. It is possible that Presbytery may have been deceived in filling up those forms of outward organisation which Scripture only outlines. But it is impossible, utterly impossible, to believe that in that organisation,—so difficult to fill up distinctly,—there lies that funda-

mental truth on which the very being of Christ's "Church" depends. No fanaticism which the wildest Presbyterian or Puritan has ever evinced, in clinging with passion to the very letters of some favourite text of Scripture, can equal the extravagance of this monstrous, textless, tenet.

But since such vain-glorious and selfish use is often made by "Churchmen" of the circumstances of the English Reformation, to the disparagement of the larger part of the Reformed world, we are tempted to inquire whether, in those circumstances, there really was anything which places the religious change there, on a higher level than that which took place in other countries. In reference, for instance, to the sin of schism, against which charge Churchmen are in the habit of believing themselves under very peculiar defence, let us see for a moment how their case really stands. If the sin of schism may be defined at all, it applies,—not to those who separate themselves from the system in which Providence has placed them, under an overpowering conviction that dangerous error and corruption forces them to do so,—but to those who take so serious a step under a less imperative call, and for a less serious object. Now, if there is one instance in the Protestant world, in which men separated themselves for less worthy reasons than others, from that great system, which, for so many hundred years, had kept the nations of Christendom in the bonds of unity, that instance is to be found in England under Henry VIII. In every other country that change took place under the impetus of a profound and passionate sense of the

degradation and mockery which had been brought on Christian truth. In England alone do we find it entered into to gratify the passions of a despot, and carried on for years as a contest between a worthless Prince and a foreign Priest, for a title which belonged to neither. Men were burnt for disbelieving the Pope's doctrines, and beheaded for believing his authority. Nor is the dishonour of those transactions confined only to Henry VIII. The most eminent name in the English Reformation is not wholly free from it. I cannot, however, mention the name of Cranmer without paying homage to that triumphant death, in which all the blots on his career were burnt and purged away. But in considering the peculiar character of the English revolt from Rome, it is impossible to forget the part he played in the King's divorce. His subsequent high station, his favour, and consequently his influence, all resulted from it. His course in this transaction is only to be explained by the title which his own memorialist (Strype) ingenuously gives him. He appears not as a Reformer, but as a "Court Divine;" and though he knew the true secret of the King's conscientious scruples—though he was intimately conversant with the object of Anne Boleyn's family, and may almost be said to have been employed by them to secure it, he deliberately took an eager part in the cause, as if one really based on religious scruple. All this he did apparently with no better principle before him than a desire to give practical denial to the "Bishop of Rome's Supremacy."

So far, then, the English Reformation does not seem peculiarly creditable in its beginnings. And how, in its later stages, does it countenance the pretensions of "Churchmen?" The powers of the Priestly Episcopate,—that one essential which the Reformers are said to have preserved—how did they treat it, and what value did they give it? They threw it without reserve at the feet of a layman. The monarch made, unmade, degraded Bishops. All their authority was vice-regal. It was considered as emanating from unconsecrated hands. When Henry died, Cranmer's spiritual authority died also; nor did he consider himself entitled to exercise it again, until his commission was renewed by the succeeding Sovereign. That mechanical efficacy, however, which is supposed to inhere in Priestly Succession was, it is believed, preserved. The lay monarch made and unmade priests; but he used other priests as the means of executing his orders. The fact of succession, therefore, continued. But there is reason to believe that even this was not estimated at the value put upon it by later "Churchmen." Many of the greatest names in the history of that English Church,—of that generation especially whose minds were enlarged by intimate intercourse with foreign Reformations, in whose vigorous theology there was no room for a petty idolising of their provincial peculiarities, and whose convictions were called to stand the test of fire,—have left abundant proof that they laid no stress whatever on the virtue of succession. It is remarkable that, though it was not till towards the end of

Elizabeth's reign that the English Protestant clergy began prominently to found high claims upon it, the same doctrine respecting the nature of "the Church" had attracted the notice and the censure of some of the earlier Bishops, as Popish errors which they were desirous of eradicating. Among the Articles of religion which Bishop Hooper distributed among the clergy of his diocese so early as 1550, we find prominent place given to one touching the true conception of the Church. The object of it is emphatically expressed in its concluding words:—"Lest any man should be seduced, believing himself to be bound unto an ordinary succession of Bishops and Priests, but only unto the Word of God, and the right use of his Sacraments."

But although such were the sentiments entertained by the greatest men in the English Church, until a period subsequent to that at which her Reformation had been fully settled, nevertheless I acknowledge the right of later generations of the Priesthood to magnify that which has drifted to them, as it were, through every accident of circumstance and opinion. Only they must remember that there is nothing so certain in that superiority which they think their succession gives, as to entitle them to speak of it in the form of positive assertion. The larger part of the Protestant world, the earliest and the best of their own predecessors, are dissenters from the sacerdotal principles on which their exclusive claims are founded. And unless this disputable—this most disputable—principle be assumed, there is

not much left in the outward history of the English Church, before which other Protestant bodies can feel disposed to lower their heads in deference. Quite the contrary. One of the most philosophical and learned foreign writers of our day, a Protestant, and not animated by any controversial bitterness against the English Church, has spoken of her in her outward, or ecclesiastical aspect, in language which might have sounded harsh even in the lips of a Covenanter. It may serve, however, to show to "Churchmen," if anything can take them out of their narrow Anglicanism, how concealed from the eye of the impartial observer, is the ground of their high claims. "*Emanée, à son origine,*" says Mons. Guizot, "*de la seule volonté du Souverain temporel, l'Eglise Anglicane avait perdu par là toute indépendance; elle n'avait plus de mission divine, et ne subsistait point, par son propre droit. Etrangers au peuple qui ne les élisait point, séparés du Pape et de l'Eglise Universelle, jadis leur appui, les évêques et le haut clergé n'étaient que les délégués du Prince, ses premiers serviteurs: situation fausse pour un corps chargé de représenter ce qu'il y a de plus indépendant et de plus élevé dans l'homme, la Foi.*" And when this clergy began to assert their claims to Divine authority, independent of every other source, in what spirit and for what purpose was the attempt made? How does it appear to those who look at this history from abroad?—abroad I mean not only as regards country, but as regards party-prejudice. In speaking of the opposition these new doctrines met with from Elizabeth, Mons. Guizot says, "*Le peuple se prononça vivement*

pour la Reine ; il ne songeait qu'à pousser plus loin la Réforme, et n'ignorait pas que, si les évêques aspiraient à l'indépendance, ce n'était point pour affranchir la foi de l'autorité temporelle, mais pour l'opprimer en leur propre nom." But, fortunately for England, the Reformation had not stopped among the mass of the people, as it had done among the clergy. It was English Puritanism and Scottish Presbytery that succeeded in overthrowing that spiritual tyranny which, under the school of Laud, the revived principles of Priesthood were attempting to establish. It must be allowed, then, that there is not a great amount of visible and obvious superiority over other Reformations in that which took place in England. It requires, therefore, very strong faith in the *invisible* virtues of the mere fact of Priestly succession, ere we can regard even with seriousness the happy Anglicanism of "Churchmen." And when we remember, again, that those virtues of succession, whatever they may be, are certainly not such as afford any safeguard against the grossest corruptions, both of faith and practice, in the Christian Church, we may safely conclude that any such trust in them would be the weakest superstition.

But the Scottish Reformation, not the English, is my subject. As I have been led, however, across the border in pursuing questions intimately connected with Presbyterian principle, I must protest against a misunderstanding which I should greatly deprecate. The method of judging of so great an event as the Reformation in England, or in any other country, by its mere outward accidents, is none of my choosing,

nor of my approval. But whoever desires to follow the "Churchman" must go with him to those lower fields of argument on which his positions rest. The great religious change of the sixteenth century was accompanied, in every country in which it took effect, with circumstances of discredit, often of disgrace. Wretched weakness, glaring inconsistency, even horrid crime were mixed up with its advance. Of these, the Reformation in England had fully as large a share as in any other country. And, moreover, that great feature of the Reformation, which is most redeeming as regards the blemishes of its outward aspect,—the passionate adherence of great masses of mankind to truths which they had come to apprehend against the powers of false authority,—was there less prominently marked. In England its irregularities, its contradictions, and its crimes, did not arise from the swaying to and fro of a great people, under the impulse of new convictions. It advanced, halted, or retired, according to the will of a good Sovereign, or the caprices of a bad one,—to the alternate predominance of real reformers, or of time-serving priests. The grand spectacle of the Reformation is never seen. There was no independence in the popular mind, or such as existed was suppressed. "Henry, Edward, Mary, and Elizabeth," says Mr. Hallam, "all found nearly equal compliance with their varying schemes of faith." Such is the outward aspect, at least, of the English Reformation.

Nevertheless, I acknowledge that this is but a most imperfect view of what it was and did. Considered, not in its progress, but in its result, it was

as glorious a Reformation as any in the world. It was as complete a Protest as any against priestly despotism in the Faith—against men again committing themselves to the authority of “the Church.” This the English Church is, in common—but only in common—with other Churches of the Reformed; and upon this its importance and its value very much depend. Whatever in its constitution may tend to lead away from this principle, or to obscure it, is a danger—a defect, in a vital organ. Whether or not it will ultimately prove for the interests of the truth in connection with that Church, that the circumstances of its early history were so peculiar, must depend very much on the discrimination with which her own members judge of them. It is impossible not to feel that such an organisation as that which the English Church was enabled to retain, may be a powerful instrument of extending, in a true direction, Christian faith and knowledge. But both principle and experience entitle us to say, that if that organisation is worshipped for its own sake,—and that, too, on the same sacerdotal theory whose practical operation has been already so thoroughly tested, and found degrading,—it will have been for the trial, not the support of truth, that the English clergy have been left a technical title, tempting them to set up the claims of Priesthood.

CHAPTER III.

CONCLUSION.

HAVING now sketched the history of Scottish Presbytery, and traced its principles from their first conception to some of their more recent developments; having also pursued the same course in respect to that party to which it has been, and is now specially opposed, it only remains that I should lay before my readers a short summing up of the principal points I have dwelt on in detail.

In the life and course of every party, as of every individual, there is a distinction to be drawn between the good results to which they have consciously and intentionally contributed, and those which may have been left to after-times by the exposure of their errors or their crimes. There have been parties, as there have been men, who have benefited society in the latter way alone, whilst others have largely contributed in both ways, to the sum of human happiness and knowledge. In reviewing the course of Scottish Presbytery, from the Reformation to the Revolution, we have met with ample ground for assigning to it a high place among the more distinguished class,—although there are points, as I have endeavoured to show, in which its course has been for warning, not example.

On account of one of its principles, if that principle stood alone, it deserves our special homage. The

stern protest which it made from the beginning, against all notions of Priesthood—of any mediatorial or exclusive power—in the Christian ministry, reached at once to one of the most profound and momentous truths which are still struggling for acceptance in the world. On this subject I have before alluded to a name, which, over a wide extent of Christendom, is now a name of solemn sound. If it had been allowed to Dr. Arnold to have his most earnest wish fulfilled,—if he had been permitted to take part in what his last words emphatically alluded to as “*THAT GREAT WORK*,” a revival of the true Commonwealth of the Church,—he could not, in this respect, have done more than the first Scotch Reformers did. He could not have disowned with more deep conviction of its danger, the very name of Priest. He could not have thrown more widely open to the Commons of the Church, the door of her councils, and the offices of her public service. The Convocation of the Church of Scotland was never a Convocation of the Clergy only. It was a great gathering—from all orders in the State,—of men whom their Christian brethren had chosen to represent them there. “The General Assembly of the Church convened at Edinburgh, where were present Superintendents, Ministers, Deacons, Commissioners from Towns and Churches;”—such is the common opening of the minutes of their proceedings. The great principle here involved has not, I think, been sufficiently remarked in connection with the history of the Church of Scotland. It entirely separates between the pretensions of “The Church” otherwise defined, and those high and uncom-

promising claims of independent power, which Scottish Presbytery always advanced, and which—though erroneously expressed in a dogmatic form—it had thus, constitutionally, the soundest title to prefer. I have deemed it my special duty in these pages, to point out the claim of Scottish Presbytery to the honour of having laid down this principle so early—so distinctly; and of having bravely defended it from all attack, through grievous years of struggle and oppression. It is necessary to dwell on this fact; for, as I have already explained, Presbyterian forms of speech are often, if not inconsistent with its deeper principles, at least such as to conceal and misrepresent them. It is right to dwell on it as due to the memory of men, the harshness of whose character has often obscured the truth of their opinions, and the value of their services. Above all, it is useful to dwell on it, as reminding us of a very needful principle, at a very needful time. I have had no space here to do more than touch a few of the thousand important consequences which this one principle involves. I can only ask my readers to consider well its value in the controversies which are raging now; and to enable them to do so, it cannot be out of place to remind them, that it is a principle in which one of the most remarkable minds of our time found room large enough to absorb its deepest interests, and in which a most holy disposition saw the possible fulfilment of its brightest hopes for the welfare of Christ's Church on earth.

Doctrinally, ecclesiastically, politically, its power is great indeed. Doctrinally—if the Christian ministry

is not a priesthood, there is a final end of half the superstitions with which Rome deformed religion. Ecclesiastically—if they are not vested as an Order, with any exclusive authority, there is an end of that spiritual usurpation which sanctified corruption, and closed every independent access to the truth. Politically—if the Christian Church is nothing but the Christian people, there is no ground left for any mystic distinction between Civil and Ecclesiastical authority. That separation which does really exist is placed in its true light—a separation not as between persons and persons, or between councils and councils, but simply between one class of subjects and another. If the boundaries of a nation coincided exactly with the boundaries of any one religious system—that is to say, if all the citizens of a State were members of the same religious body, one and the same Assembly might rightfully and naturally legislate on both those subjects. It is merely the necessities of outward circumstance—the fact of religious divisions, and other facts of a similar kind—which prevent both those subjects being cognisable by one and the same authority. No Divine law would be infringed by an entire coincidence of the two authorities, were it practicable; still less is any such law infringed by a partial coincidence, where it very often is both possible and wise.

All this follows immediately and necessarily from the principle that there is no special order, or caste of men, gifted with exclusive power in spiritual concerns. But this denial of a false and superstitious distinction only places in a clearer light that true

distinction which really does exist. There is a distinction between temporal and spiritual things, and there must be a corresponding distinction—not necessarily in the men who legislate—but in the nature of the legislation. In temporal matters human legislation is invested, *proprio jure*, with great authority,—it is properly *enactive*. In spiritual things human legislation has no direct authority; it is merely *declaratory*. In the one case no number of dissentient voices is entitled to contravene the legislative power, because society has a right to enforce obedience to its civil laws. In the other case, if there be one single mind which dissents from a declaratory interpretation put upon the laws of God, that mind is entitled to maintain its dissent and to act upon it—because on such subjects human authority is none. Is there any principle, then, which cuts more directly at the root of extravagant pretensions on the part of religious bodies; and at the same time places on a broader, firmer basis, the rights of religious tolerance?

Indeed, in noticing, however slightly, the points in which grateful acknowledgments are due to Scottish Presbytery, I cannot omit some more special mention of the influence it had, in early establishing and rendering familiar to the national mind, the most just and sound ideas of constitutional liberty. Its course has been indeed exposed to the charge of turbulence; and beyond all doubt the charge is true in one sense, and has some foundation in another. It was turbulent always, against the lawless attempts of avarice, or the more systematic violence of usurping power. It was turbulent sometimes, from the presence

of ideas which were crude, and of others which may be pronounced fanatic. But, on the whole, it was a course which deserves our gratitude, as not less powerful in its influence for good on secular, than on religious politics. Amidst a nobility who were rebels one day, and servile courtiers the next, the spirit of Presbytery was the one guardian of the people's reasonable rights—the one bar against their overthrow from anarchy or despotism. This too it was consciously, and of purpose. In the civil wars its thoughts were the last to wander beyond the limits of the constitution; and they were the first to return within them.

Such are some of the points in which the course of Scottish Presbytery seems entitled to take a high place among those great parties which have impelled human opinion in a right direction, and had permanent and salutary influence on after times. There are others, I think, which, being of a vaguer character, there is no space here to develop or explain. Leaving them to the reflection of my readers, I shall only observe in passing, that to me it seems a matter of no small importance, that so large a part of the popular mind in this country, should have been moulded in a form so very different from that which the English Reformation took; and should thus be prone by their prejudices, and able by their principles, to oppose the dangerous tendencies which are being developed now.

Any discussion on points of doctrinal religion would be beyond the limits I have assigned myself. It is right, however, to take some notice of the influence Scottish Presbytery has had in that which is the great work of all Churches, and by their success in

which they must all finally be judged. Indeed it is not necessary to touch on dogmatism when we speak of Christianity. There may be very little spiritual religion in connection with the purest system of belief. This is true of the individual, and also of the body. So, on the other hand, great depth and earnestness of devotion may be found under corrupted creeds. Thank God, there are wild flowers on every spot of Christian ground. But it would be strange to believe in the fact of revelation, yet think it indifferent whether that revelation be rightly understood or not. Intellectual apprehension is of no value as superseding, but of immense value as educating, the religious affections. To worship it for its own sake is the idolatry of Protestantism. At all times we have a Scylla and Charybdis on either hand. It is the prominent characteristic of the Romish system that it appeals to every part of our mental constitution rather than to the intellect. The disciple is debarred from comparing the doctrines he believes, with the source from which they claim authority. The consequence was, of course, increasing misconception of revealed truth. The Protestant reaction tended to concentrate on dogmatic knowledge the importance which had been formerly attached to the feelings of devotion, or to the facts of ritual obedience. Scottish Presbytery is one of those Protestant bodies, the aspect of whose system is most predominantly dogmatic. This character appears not only in the nature of its creed, but also in the regulation of its worship. In the one, the rigours of Calvinist theology result from an extreme desire to *know* and

define accurately. In the other, the absence of form results from a jealous dread of the power of the feelings in misleading the understanding. Under Romanism, the exclusive value set on the mere emotions of reverence, obscured, and almost extinguished, knowledge of the truth. Who may say that under Protestantism, too great stress on knowledge of the truth, may not have checked devotional feeling?

Scottish Presbytery has repudiated some religious observances which other Churches of the Reformed—even some of those most nearly allied—have preserved in common. This, however, it had a full right to do, if there was any reason to believe that from association, or from any other cause, they would not tend to a good practical result. But I cannot pass from this subject without protesting against a continuance of the old bigotry of passion and prejudice which denounces as positively sinful every practice, however reasonable in itself, or consonant with the spirit of the Christian Faith, for which Presbyterians cannot themselves see an exact, literal, precedent in the Apostolic narrative. That the practice, for example, of commemorating, by special religious services, the birth of the Saviour should be gravely pronounced to be an “interference” with that Saviour’s “Headship” seems to me as irrational, and as humiliating a trait in the character of any religious party, as could well be found even in the history of fanaticism. I am not one of those who attach any superstitious importance or virtue to such special services. If Presbyterians cannot render them without rousing prejudices which they have inherited from their fathers,

by all means let them not be rendered. But at least it would be candid and reasonable to acknowledge that they may profit others; and that the same services which are true services on another day, do not become sinful by being rendered at the time which devotional spirit has consecrated to their use.

That the number of minor commemorations became a gross abuse in the Christian Church is a proposition which probably only a few gentlemen of the Oxford school would now deny. These, however, stand on a different and lower ground than the observance of the great epochs of our Saviour's birth, death, and resurrection. Yet in general it may be safely said that any true worshipping of God does not become false worshipping of Him, because it is prompted by recollection of the grace which He may have given to His chosen servants. In an abstract point of view there is much to be said in favour of such a practice. There is a power, of which we are all conscious, in the reverential remembrance of the Great who have gone before us. The power of giving us personal interest in their virtues, and thereby adding to the intensity of our own feelings, is one of the best influences to which the Author of our being has made it subject. It is assistance very powerful, and very near at hand. In lower departments of human nature, who does not recognise its power? Any association which invites us to the love of illustrious example, is valuable in promoting personal elevation of character. The love of country is one which does so in an eminent degree. The citizen has no nobler birthright derived from country, than the personal

property it gives him in the memory of its great men. It is thus that public and private character is raised, or if high, is to a great degree kept from falling. There is no reason why the same principle should not have equal value in the higher sphere of religion. There is no better way of remembering and understanding our own duty, than by keeping up loving memory of those who have well performed theirs. The narrow path has been trod before us ; why should we shut our eyes on those who beckon us to follow ? St. Paul did not seal up so jealously the memory of those of whom it was pre-eminently true that they had " all died in Faith ; " and perhaps there is no passage of the Bible which gives us a more vivid impression of the spiritual privileges of the Jewish people, than that in which this Hebrew of the Hebrews incites and instructs his brethren, by summing up that long catalogue of Saints which begins with Abel, and ends with Samuel and the Prophets. The history and the memory of these were in a peculiar degree their own. Christianity has made them ours also ; and has added besides a great company of names, which we may recount, as St. Paul has recounted these. The saints of the New, need not be less valuable to us, than the saints of the Old Economy to the Jews.

It is of some importance, therefore, that if any branch of the Church rejects the practice of commemorating, by religious services, any example, however signal, of God's best gifts to individual men, this rejection should be rested on grounds which at least do not revolt the judgment of the Christian world. In conjunction with the principles of Priesthood—

that is to say when deprived of the superintendence of the understanding, and under no security for doctrinal truth,—it is certain that *remembering* became the worshipping of Saints. Rational respect became irrational idolatry. Presbytery may very reasonably contend that under any system—without any Priesthood—such feelings will at last overpower the understanding, and cannot be made to work in subordination to doctrinal truth. Whatever may be thought of this as a speculative opinion, it is one on which Presbytery is well entitled to act as regards its own conduct, since no advantage which such a practice could give, is worth so great a danger if it exists at all.

In some other respects, however, I have no hesitation in expressing my own conviction that Scottish Presbytery has left its House of worship needlessly bare of furniture. There are chords in our mental frame which it has been too much afraid to touch. It is true that when struck too strongly they have drowned the harmony of truth; but there is a richness and depth of tone which is often lost when they are silent. Affections of the mind so deeply rooted cannot have been planted there without an object; and we know what power they have exerted when enlisted on the side of error. The effect produced upon us, for example, by beautiful and imposing forms, is one of the phenomena of our mental constitution which, whether we choose to overlook it or not, is, nevertheless,—a fact. It is one of the articulate voices of material things which speak directly to the spirit:—one of the many with which God has enriched His great Parable,—the

World of Sense. I am disposed to think that Scottish Presbytery, in refusing so entirely all help from this source, has been speaking against nature; and has not escaped the consequences which such a course invariably entails. Among the numerous families of Scotland, who, since the Revolution, but more frequently in later times, have left the communion of Presbytery, and joined that of the English Church, very few have been induced to do so by any previous conversion to the "Church principles" of Prelatic Priesthood. Some have, doubtless, been influenced by the fancy of belonging to a more fashionable religious body; and many more by the associations of English academical education. Some, too, have latterly been estranged, not unnaturally, by those extravagant forms of expression which have descended from the times of Melville and of Henderson:—forms which may be justly condemned as fanatic, even when used in the service of the paramount interests which were at stake in their days;—but which bear this character still more glaringly on their front, when repeated in our own time. But the deeper source of the extensive alienation which has taken place, is to be found in the superior attractions of a more ritual worship,—in the weakness of a predominantly dogmatic and informal system to keep up permanent attachment, in times of religious peace,—as well as in some more positive objections to which such a system is exposed. For example, a partial * use of Liturgical forms of prayer—

* That liturgical prayer should be used exclusively in religious worship, seems to me as unfortunate as that it should not be used at all.

to which the first Scotch Reformers had no objection, and which the legislative institutions of Presbytery entitle it to adopt at any moment—would alone, I think, have been of immense value in engaging the affections, and preventing the straying of its members. For, certainly, there is no more just exception against the worship of Scottish Presbytery than its effect in placing the most devotional part of Divine service so entirely at the mercy of the individual minister who happens to conduct it.

It is unquestionably true, however, that those very characteristics of the worship of Scottish Presbytery which so much neglect some tendencies of the human mind, are the same which gratify certain others. Its predominant dogmatism ministers to that desire of knowledge, which—in itself one of the noblest instincts of our nature—has no nobler or more engrossing duty to perform than that of inciting us to the clear apprehension of spiritual truth. And in times of strong reaction from discovered error, and of fierce battle against its returning tide, Scottish Presbytery has breathed into its children a passionate attachment which has been of invaluable service to the outward Church, and has had its own share of influence in fanning the purer flame of religion in the heart. Thus, too, in regard to the nakedness of its worship:—the negative objection of want of form, has become the positive attraction of simplicity; and no religious body has had greater power of inspiring intense devotion in times of trial. But it is for such times, especially, that the genius of Scottish Presbytery is fitted. In the calmer times of religious

peace—that is to say in times when the tendencies which dogmatism gratifies are not called to act—it has had less power in fixing the affections of its people. Let the necessities of religious controversy again arise, and again, too, Scottish Presbytery will perform a part of no small importance. It has inherited in its dogmatism truths which it cannot too eagerly defend, and which it is perhaps its peculiar mission in this country to preserve.

Although it is one great business, certainly, of every Ecclesiastical system to keep the understanding anchored in the integrity of revealed truth, yet this is but secondary and subordinate to the higher work of bringing home to the individual heart, the spiritual operation of the Christian faith. To this end every such system must be better adapted, in proportion as it rests on a broader basis of humanity. There are not so very many avenues open to the heart, that any one of them can be well spared : and whether it be to take firmer hold of the memory, or of the imagination, or of the principles of association ;—whether it be to the love of beautiful, or to the power of solemn forms—the more numerous and varied are the appeals to nature, the more thoroughly furnished is a Church to the great object of its being.

Yet we must never forget, in considering such a subject as the value of any Ecclesiastical or religious system, that man, though possessed of reason, is an exceedingly unreasoning being. Although there may be no logical or natural connection whatever, between what is true in our principles, and what may have

become usual in our practice, we very readily fall into the belief that the one is identified with the other. And wherever this belief exists, it may be said to gather a certain degree of truth around it. However unreasonable may be the practice in itself,—however inconsistent it may even be, in a logical point of view, with the principles to which it has become attached,—yet the belief referred to, constitutes a connection of itself, which it is often impossible, and sometimes not desirable, to break. It becomes true in fact, however false in theory, that if we destroy the prejudice, we often undermine the principle. Where the one is comparatively harmless, and the other is important, it may be well, if not to allow the prejudice to rest, at least to assail it with the greatest caution. Presbytery has had the misfortune, not only to have many of its shallowest prejudices accidentally associated with its deepest and most invaluable truths, but to see those prejudices met only by other prejudices as absurd, in alliance with principles both dangerous and false. It has no living recollection, for example, of Liturgical forms of prayer, except as connected with the violence of Laud, and the daring dogmas of an usurping Priesthood. Against such Liturgies, representing such a spirit, Presbytery may be excused for cherishing with some excess of affection the Polity of Melville, the Covenant of Henderson, or even the three-legged-stool of Jenny Geddes.

And withal it must be allowed of Scottish Presbytery that—despite all its extravagancies and prejudices, as well those which it has ever cherished, as those to which it still unfortunately clings—despite

all the rashness and fanaticism with which it has been wont to declare its own course to be directly sanctioned by the Will of God,—and the strange incoherence with which, to this hour, it speaks of the powers of its Assemblies, as representing the “Headship” and the “Crown of Christ”—despite these, and all other reproaches which may be justly brought against it—it is a Church which has presented Christianity to the faith of its children, in a form as pure and practical as any in the world. I shall not take up and repeat those expressions of flattery which become current in every religious body, in reference to its own standards of belief; and which pass from generation to generation, and from mouth to mouth, without expressing anything beyond an attachment which is often as thoughtless as it is hereditary. I am not disposed to regard either the Westminster Confession, or the Catechisms of Scottish Presbytery, as wholly faultless outlines of the Christian Scheme; nor have I failed to observe that the Calvinism of certain parts has sometimes had an injurious effect on the practical theology of its pulpit. But, looking at the history of Christianity since its first corruptions, and to that of the various bodies which have been formed since the Reformation, I hold it to be indisputably true; that, on the whole, no Church, since that of the Apostles, has with more truth, more sincerity, or more success, preached the pure doctrines of the Cross.

APPENDIX.

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APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.—No. 1.

(PREFACE, Second Edition, p. vi.)

THE first and most important misrepresentation of my opinions, of which I have cause to complain against the Quarterly Reviewer,* is one which I characterise as broad and flagrant, not only because it is upon a most important subject, but because it can only have arisen from the greatest carelessness on his part. It is in reference to the subject commonly called "The connection between Church and State," and is founded on certain allusions I have made to the name and opinions of Dr. Arnold. The misrepresentation commences by the gratuitous insertion of words which I do not use, in what, nevertheless, purports to be an indirect quotation. In the Preface to the first edition, I have said that the "principles of Scottish Presbytery *on the nature of the Church*" were the same as those of Dr. Arnold. I had framed this sentence with especial care, to define and limit the point on which I believe the identity of principle to exist; because I was quite aware that certain

* Quart. Rev. No. CLXVII. Dec. 1848, Art. III.

opinions consequent, or supposed to be consequent, on that principle, are commonly ascribed to Dr. Arnold, which certainly are NOT identical either with the principles of Presbytery, or with my own views. The most prominent of these latter opinions are some on the "Church and State" question, which—variously stated, according to the admiration or hostility of individuals—are commonly attributed to Dr. Arnold. I have a distinct recollection that the above sentence in the Preface was at first less guardedly worded, and that, observing it might be erroneously construed, I altered it, and specifically defined the point of general principle on which alone I consider the conception of Arnold and that of Presbytery to agree. All precautions have been in vain, against the carelessness of the Reviewer. What does he do? He actually inserts an interjected clause to convey the very meaning which I had effectually excluded! He announces it as the "astounding result" of my Essay, "that the true principles of Scottish Presbytery on the nature of the Church, INCLUDING ITS ESSENTIAL RELATIONS TO THE STATE, were, in fact, those (Preface, p. vii.) of Dr. Arnold."

This first foundation of misunderstanding being laid, and broad enough it is certainly, a huge superstructure is accumulated thereupon. In the next sentence the opinions of Dr. Arnold are designated (I believe, with very great inaccuracy) as "hyper-Erastian theories," and I am described as searching in vain for "a teller on the division" on the question whether these said "hyper-Erastian theories" are, or are not, identical with the "familiar, and seemingly

very different, features of Scottish Presbytery." But this is not all; the original misconception becomes broader and broader, and opinions in favour of which I have not written one single syllable, are ascribed to me again and again, each time more absurdly represented than before. I am described (p. 89) as holding that "all the concerns of the spiritual kingdom—all that appertains to the discipline of the soul of man—shall be regulated by (doubtless devout) secretaries of State." Again, in the same page, I am represented as a follower of Dr. Arnold, "in contending that all Church power should be wielded by the State."

I am not here concerned to defend Dr. Arnold or to represent his opinions in a fairer point of view. He was sometimes vehement in his expressions both of feeling and opinion; and, perhaps, individual passages may be found which at least excuse such liberties of translation. I cannot, however, allow them to pass before me without declaring my conviction that they caricature his views almost as grossly as they caricature my own.*

But however this may be, I must again emphatically declare that the only identity which I have affirmed to exist between the conceptions of Dr. Arnold and those of Scottish Presbytery, is one limited to a definite point of principle. That principle I have guardedly alluded to in the Preface as

* See Arnold's declaration that his idea "was *not* Erastianism"—"not the subjection of the Church to the State, WHICH, INDEED, WOULD BE A MOST MISERABLE AND MOST UNCHRISTIAN CONDITION."—*Arnold's Sermons*. "Christian Life, its Course," &c., Introduction, p. 62.

one touching the "nature of the Church." There are, I think, only two remaining passages in the Essay in which I again refer to Arnold. In both, the reference is limited with equal care, but with a more accurate definition of the principle alluded to. At p. 35 (both editions), that principle is described as "the narrowing of the space which has come to separate the great body of the Church from a class of its officers—the amalgamation of the clergy and the laity in the discharge of common duties and in the exercise of ruling power." Again, and for the last time, at p. 292, first edition, p. 280, sec. ed., Dr. Arnold is referred to; and again, with equal care, the reference is connected with, and limited to, the same idea, "the stern protest of Presbytery against all notions of Priesthood—of any mediatorial or exclusive power—in the Christian ministry." This is the "principle on the nature of the Church" in support of which I have again invoked that illustrious name. With what seemed to me, at the time, superabundant caution, I had again carefully excluded misconception as to the specific work of Presbytery on behalf of which his testimony was claimed, by the clause, "in this respect." And again, with probably redundant fullness, the reference proceeds thus:—"He could not have disowned, with more deep conviction of its danger, the very name of Priest. He could not have thrown more widely open to the Commons (laity) of the Church, the doors of her councils and the offices of her public service."

This, then, is the principle of Presbytery; and this, too, was the principle of Arnold "on the nature

of the Church,"—that it neither is, nor includes a Priesthood; that there is no order or caste of men, separated from others, and gifted exclusively with spiritual government, by the Will of God; that the Church is the whole body of believers, and that all, without distinction, are entitled, either directly or indirectly, to a voice in its affairs.

I am prepared to maintain every consequence of this principle which can be shown to follow necessarily from it. I have not yet discovered that one of these consequences is that "all Church power should be wielded by the State," or that "all the concerns of the Spiritual kingdom—the discipline of the soul of man—should be regulated by devout Secretaries." I am not aware that Dr. Arnold ever made this discovery; but at all events I am certain it never occurred to me. If these opinions are ascribed to me by the critic, not directly but by inference, at least this distinction ought to have been acknowledged. I should have cause to complain of this treatment of the Essay, even if I had barely announced the principle without any explanation of the consequences which I accept as its result. But I have still greater cause to complain, when the fact is that I have defined the consequences which I accept, almost as carefully as the principle itself. Not only is it erroneous that I have advocated the subjection of the Church to the "State,"—that I have obliterated the distinction between spiritual and civil government,—but it is in the teeth of numerous and emphatic passages, in which I declare that such a distinction does exist, and define, with some precision, the sense in which I

understand it to be a sound distinction. I have repeated over and over again—not that there is no such distinction—but that there is one understanding of its nature which is, and another understanding which is not, consistent with the fundamental principle of Presbytery and of Arnold. At page 294, first edition, page 282, sec. ed. it will be observed that I have laid down with care what I conceive to be the consequences of that principle on this important subject. I have said—not, “It leaves no ground for any distinction between civil and ecclesiastical authority,” but—“It leaves no ground for any MYSTIC distinction between,” &c. I then proceed to indicate what is the distinction which I hold to be “mystic” and erroneous, and what not mystic and sound. And lest this passage, touching as it does upon a purely abstract view of the subject, should occasion misunderstanding, a succeeding paragraph set out as follows: “But this denial of a false and superstitious distinction only places IN A CLEARER LIGHT that true distinction which REALLY DOES EXIST.” Those who will take the trouble to refer to the passage immediately following, will hardly fail to see that I have laid down points in which I hold the distinction to apply, far more vital and far more deep than those on which it is too commonly made to rest—the consecration of a Priesthood, the Divine right of Bishops, or the Divine right of Assemblies.

There is one passage of the Essay to which the Reviewer refers, as justifying the broadest form in which he has represented my (supposed) “hyper-Erastian theories:” it is at pp. 227-8, first edition,

page 218-19, sec. ed. It is quite possible that there may be some room for misapprehension owing to obscurity. I cannot, however, believe that any man who reads the whole passage carefully, will consider the corresponding paraphrase in the Review as otherwise than most unfaithful. Still as I am quite sure there is no willing unfaithfulness on the part of the Reviewer, I need only request that this passage be read in connexion with that before referred to at pp. 294—5, first edition, page 282, sec. ed. I do not see that, even by itself, it can possibly be made to bear the meaning assigned to it. I adhere to the argument, that if there be no caste vested with the government of the Church, but if that government belongs (as Presbyterian principle affirms it to be) to the representative Assemblies of the Christian people, all distinction between such ecclesiastical Assemblies, and the secular Assemblies of a Christian State is reduced to, and depends upon, these two distinctive circumstances alone: First—That the former must be composed entirely of the members of one religious body, whereas the latter may be of the most heterogeneous religious materials: Second—That the subject-matter of the deliberations of the former is Ecclesiastical concerns, whereas the composition of the latter renders them incapable of dealing with such concerns effectually. The first is a distinction which results not from any abstract principle, but purely from the external circumstances of the Christian world in respect to religious disagreements; the latter distinction, again, is one which depends upon the first. In exact proportion, therefore, as the out-

ward circumstance of religious disunion is kept out of view, or is supposed to cease, the *personal* distinction (so to speak) between "Church" and "State," ceases to be one of either necessity or principle, and becomes of less and less importance even as a matter of arrangement. Now, as no one will contend that religious division is a law of God—except in the sense in which all the existing facts of our condition may be said to be so—it seems clear that a distinction which rests upon this fact alone, cannot be held to be an ordinance of God in any higher sense.

Of course, this is a view of the subject taken solely for the purpose of elucidating an abstract point of principle. The point where the distinction between a Christian Church Government and a Christian State Government, would cease to be a distinction of necessity or of principle, is referred to solely for the purpose of determining the nature of that distinction where it is still essential. By the theoretical we are guided in the practical—from the abstract we analyse the nature of the concrete. Thus, if it be determined in the abstract that the personal separation between the legislatures of "Church" and "State" is one necessary only on account of religious difference, we are enabled in practical life to condemn, as superstitious and illogical, the objections entertained by some to such partial coincidences between the two authorities as are practicable—in spite of difficulty.

It must never be forgotten, however, that though it is possible theoretically to conceive the distinction obliterated between the Assemblies of a Christian Church and those of an united Christian State, there

is another distinction between the extent to which human authority can go in civil things, and the extent to which it can go in spiritual things, which never can be obliterated under any circumstances whatever ; —a distinction depending on the nature of things and the rights of individual conscience. This latter is not generally separated from the former ; and it goes to make up all the truth which there really is in the idea a *Jure Divino* separation between "Church" and "State." I have alluded to it particularly at page 295, first edition ; page 283, sec. ed.

The statement, therefore, of the Reviewer (p. 89) that, in these arguments, I have represented " the normal state of man to be that in which all that concerns the discipline of his soul " is to be regulated by the " State,"—or, in other words, either by promiscuous Parliaments or "devout Secretaries,"—is the most inconceivable perversion of my opinions.

The same misapprehension extends, of course, to the more practical subject of the opinions I ascribe to the Presbyterian Reformers. I am represented as converting them into "sickly disciples of Erastus" (p 92), and as explaining away all their fierce and determined struggles for the independence of the Church against the usurpations of secular power. No broader misconception is to be found even in this Review. Not only do I not deny or explain away the notorious fact that the independence of the Church, and its right to resist the usurpations of a civil government, is the great leading feature in the history of Presbytery ; but in repeated passages throughout the Essay I point out how this principle, as founded upon, and

interpreted by, their still deeper principle on the nature of "The Church," was placed by those men on a basis more firm and unassailable than it had ever been placed before. What I have assailed is not the existence of this principle as a part of their opinions—still less the importance which they undoubtedly attached to it,—but only the logical accuracy of the forms under which that principle came to be expressed. To confound my objection to those forms of expression with a desire to explain away the existence of the principle itself, is the more strange on the part of the Reviewer, since he himself instinctively recognises the distinction between the idea and its conventional formula, in one of those very passages in which he so erroneously states my argument. "We have abstracted (meaning that the Essay dismisses) the celebrated idea, *expressed, with however little of technical accuracy*, under the phrase of the sole headship of the Lord Jesus" (p. 81). Now it is perfectly true that I treat as the result of accidental circumstances the forms under which the idea of the independence of the Church came to be expressed; I question, too, as the Reviewer does, their "technical (logical) accuracy;" and I maintain that this erroneous language reacted in producing the most erroneous conception of the real nature of the principle, and of the basis to which it can be referred, consistently with the most indisputable laws of the Presbyterian Church. But it is a total misunderstanding that I have "abstracted" the idea itself from among the historical principles of Presbytery. I have shown that the independence of its Assemblies was an instinct long before it became a dogma, and

that it rested on the broad and solid basis of their popular constitution. But I have also shown that that basis was so broad and so popular that it was at first attempted to embrace the civil government within it; and that it was not until that government showed symptoms of hostility, and had for some years refused co-operation with the great mass of the Reformed people, that the abstract idea of "The Church" as a distinct organisation from the "State," was forced upon the Assemblies of Presbytery, and gradually took a more and more dogmatic form. I hold the Presbyterian instinct of the independence of the Church Assemblies to have been a necessary result of their composition, and that composition again to have rested on a sound understanding on the nature of the Christian Church. The abstract idea again of the distinction between that Church and the civil government of the country, I conceive to be a subsequent result of the same fundamental principle when brought into contact with the realities of a religious disunited world. That fundamental principle, accordingly, "on the nature of the Church" I have laid down as the most "primary and essential" among the ideas of Presbytery: to the other I have assigned a secondary rank, not as regards practical importance, but only as regards speculative truth. I have not taken this view, as the Critic charges me with having done, on any arbitrary or fictitious principle of selection: I have rested it both on a careful reference to historical facts, and on a parallel train of reasoning. The Reviewer treats the result of the combined narrative and argument with some contempt; but he has not

attempted to show that the one is artificial and deceptive, or that the other is unsound. I have traced a certain development of historical events, and a parallel development of principle or opinion. I have compared the writings of Knox and Melville,—The First and Second Books of Discipline,—and these again with the circumstances under which each was written. The same method of narrating and of reasoning is pursued throughout the Essay. In the only attempt of the Reviewer to fix upon a point in which the fallacy of my system is exposed, he is not fortunate in his selection. "The institution of Superintendency," he says, "adopted by Knox, but not by Melville, is explained away as belonging to the crude period of transition and its peculiar exigencies. But then, when Knox identifies the Church and State, and Melville divides them, and even lets us hear the clank 'of the Keys,' the later phenomenon is the local and accidental one, and the earlier the primary and essential. Now, we ask, why are second thoughts to be preferred in the one case, and first thoughts in another?" (p. 91.) To this question I can give at once the most satisfactory reply. I assign to Superintendency a temporary and accidental place, not from any arbitrary tests of my own, neither to suit any "foregone conclusion," but simply because Knox himself assigned that place to it, and expressly referred it to the necessities of the time. The Critic is here surely convicted of carelessness, rather than the author of inconsistency.

Another great misconception in the Review respects the subject of religious toleration. I have said that

the Scotch Reformers laid down the fundamental principle that "Scripture was to be interpreted, and interpreted only by itself;" and that "neither Realms nor Councils could render obligatory, on their belief, positions which could be proved to be discordant therewith." The Reviewer runs off with indignation to conclude that by this I assert them to have laid down the broad principle of the right of private judgment, and the consequent law of toleration. "With what shadow or semblance of truth are we to be told that Scripture, according to the Reformers of any country, most of all those of Scotland, was to be interpreted only by itself?" (p. 82.) He then goes on to quote the numerous cases in which these said Reformers insisted on conformity to their Creeds, and Confessions, and Covenants. All very true! But strange to say, the assertion which makes the Reviewer so angry is true also—not the "shadow or semblance of a truth," but the very literal fact, as he may himself see if he chooses to refer to the Scotch Confession of 1560. The indignation of the Critic arises from his supposing, in the face of the very passage from which he quotes, that I attribute to the Reformers, not only the assertion of the principle, but the acknowledgment of its consequence—the right of toleration. This unaccountable misconception produces the following rebuke:—"The Duke of Argyll has done great, though unconscious injustice to the Reformers, when he says that they were capable of at once clearly realising the principle of freedom in religious thought, and cruelly tyrannising over those who practised it. The forced marches of intellect through which he

would have put them, they had not really made; had they done so, this intolerance would have branded them with a moral baseness from which we may now gladly pronounce them free." (p. 85.) I shall only beg my readers to judge of the carefulness of this Reviewer, and of his acquaintance with the book which he has undertaken to criticise, when he has read the passage I have written on this very point at p. 31, (both editions). It is droll enough to receive so very grave a lecture for an error which not only has not been committed, but which such special pains have been taken to avoid.

The only remaining special criticism of the Reviewer which I shall notice here, is that on which he animadverts (p. 93—5) on the terms in which I have spoken of the Government under which the Secession of 1843 took place. I shall pass over the shade of irritation which appears in this passage, because, all circumstances considered, it is not unnatural. I shall confine my attention to the notice he takes of my assertion that the Act of Patronage of Queen Anne is undeniably unconstitutional. There is at least one plausible, if not very solid ground, on which this character of the Act may be disputed.* But the Critic has missed it, and takes his stand upon two other arguments which are curious enough. The first is that the statute of Anne is more than 130 years old. The second is that Lord Aberdeen's name, (to say nothing of other members of the Government), affords a pledge that all was done that could be done "short of the actual abandonment" of that Act.

* See Append. No. 6.

Under the head of the first argument, the Reviewer says "To those 130 years, and to those years alone, must the advocates of Presbytery appeal, when they undertake to show its compatibility unto our civil institutions." I do not know that on this subject any assertion could have been hazarded of more astounding rashness. What has become of all the great Constitutional Statutes, which as "*LEGES LEGUM*," have been registered, fought for, repealed, and re-registered again in the old Statute Book of Scotland respecting her Church? What of the Act of 1567—what of the still more famous Statutes of 1592—what of 1690—what of the Act of Security—what of the Treaty of Union? All—all these most famous laws, round which such battles were fought, and such victories were won—are they all swallowed up and merged in this engulphing Act of Anne! If this were indeed the view of the Cabinet of 1843, no wonder the Secession was allowed to happen! I do believe this was virtually the view they took. The Act of Anne was the Act which in their eyes was more important than all the other statutes put together, or than the unity of the Church itself. But this is precisely the opinion which stamps that Act with a character "manifestly, undeniably unconstitutional."

As regards the other argument, I need hardly say a word. In common with the rest of the world, and in common especially with all who know him, I entertain profound respect for the name and character of Lord Aberdeen. But no name however great, no character however good, should be used in this way to

protect the public policy of public men, from the right of all men to pronounce a full and free opinion on the character and results of their public acts.

Lastly, there are some passages in this Review which I cannot help noticing with some surprise. My Essay does not pretend to be a history; neither did I desire it to be merely a lively epitome of events, though these were undoubtedly events of no common variety and interest. It was intended to be something which is different from both of these. It was intended to be a running commentary on a most pregnant history,—to throw light on its prominent, and to cast into shadow its unimportant facts—to trace the principles, and lay aside the accidents,—above all, to bring home to the understanding and sympathy of our own times, the language and the thoughts of men who, in fighting battles on a narrow field and in an old time, were winning victories which are resounding still, and maintaining doctrines of deepest interest to the whole Christian world. For this attempt to distinguish the “primary and essential” from the “local and accidental” in the ecclesiastical history of Scotland, I am severely reprimanded by the critic. His lecture is expressed in terms which seem to me to direct themselves rather against the attempt itself, than the mode in which I have carried it into effect. Such seems the drift of the injunction, “frankly to accept all men and all systems when we travel back into the past, in their own sense and in their own spirit;” (p. 93) or, again, the condemnation of “Eclecticism,” “as a determination to teach facts what they shall be, instead of learning

what they are ; to pick historic order to pieces, and reconstruct it according to the newest fashions." This seems to me but a plausible form of attacking the highest ends of historical enquiry, and the only means by which these ends can be attained. There are three leading ideas of historical writing. First there is the skeleton, the dry bones of history,—the mere chronicle of events. Next there is the dramatic representation—the revival of the living thing, with all the flush of its old passions, and the hurry of its busy interests, without any attempt to distinguish those which are "clean gone for ever," from those which are living still. This is the method which seems to be indicated by the critic when he talks of "simply accepting all men and all systems in their own sense and in their own spirit." The trivial things which they made important—the important things which they esteemed but little ; the interests which have been buried with them, but on which all their energies, perhaps, were spent,—those which have long survived them, but in which they may have seen no value ; language which was the mere idiom of a time and place, babblings which have no force, and almost no meaning now—words which breathe thoughts of perpetual interest to society, and which will never lose their power, because they belong to truth ;—all are to be accepted "frankly," that is, without discrimination. We are to look upon history as a rustic looks upon a play, or read it as a child reads a fable, following faithfully all its dialogues, and accepting "frankly" all its story. This is one way, certainly ; but there is a third mode of dealing with

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history, which combines the fidelity of the one with the interest of the other, and with a still higher result than either or than both. We can preserve the order of events, and represent with vividness a living picture of men and of their doings. We can even throw ourselves into their place, and sympathise with their passions. We can enter into their hopes and fears with a faithful appreciation of their spirit. But besides and above all this, we can look with the eye of judgment as well as with the eye of imagination. No generation has ever passed away without carrying along with it some mists which more or less obscured the sight of its own children. And as our atmosphere is clearer, so is our horizon wider. There is no presumption, neither is there mere fancy in supposing, that we can see many events in a truer light than that in which they were viewed before. It implies, unfortunately, no clearer vision into the things of our own day, because the advantage which time gives to each successive generation, is very much like that which a man gains in ascending the steep face of a mountain. Every step opens a better view behind, though probably no better view before, him. Such is our position with reference to the actors in the great events of the Reformation. We look down, as it were, on things which closely surrounded them. We can see that some which they thought inseparable, in reality stood apart; whilst others had a close connection which, in their view, had none. It does not make, but mars the truth of history, to forego such advantage. It is the highest end of history to cast every possible new light upon the past, not simply to

reproduce it in its own. I admit that as this is the highest end, so also it is the most difficult to attain. It may be done well, or it may be done ill. We may use wrong tests and arrive at a wrong result. We may take erroneous observations and lay down false bearings. We may depress what was really important, and we may raise what was really trivial. But the attempt is a right attempt, and the object in view is a right object. I have made this attempt on a small scale, but in reference to a deeply interesting passage of former times. I am willing to consider any evidence that I have presented a fallacious view. But broad misconceptions of what that view is, and protests against any attempt to present such a view at all, is all that I can find in this Review.

I am amused, however, by observing that the Critic can see the value of giving a free translation to the literal facts of history when the credit of his own Church is concerned in the result. There is some jealousy, I fancy, in the spirit with which he deals with the unquestionable fact that the Presbyterian constitution did embody in an eminent degree, and in a practical form, the great principle of the right of the laity to exercise the highest powers in the government of the Church. I cannot otherwise account for the strange passage, in which he says, that if this be the principle I most esteem, I ought to "prefer Puritanism to Presbytery," and chaunt the praises of the "Westminster Assembly" (p. 88). The Critic must be perfectly aware, that the principle was recognised as the fundamental basis of the Presbyterian Assemblies, before, probably, the oldest man who sat at West-

minster had been born. I agree, however, with the Reviewer, that that principle has more or less directly,—more or less consciously,—been involved in all the systems of the Reformed; and I agree with him also, that in the English Church, it is represented, though in an obscure and objectionable form, by the supremacy of the Crown, which has become, in fact, the supremacy of Parliament (p. 87). There was no other provision in her constitution which could preserve this principle from neglect; and it was on this account that Dr. Arnold declared that the supremacy of the Crown was of providential value in the English Church. But this is a purely philosophical and abstract view of what that supremacy actually was. This was not the point of view in which it was regarded by the monarch who first assumed it, nor was it in this spirit, or with this idea, that it was exercised by his successors. How then, if I may be allowed to apply his own language to himself, can this Reviewer venture to “teach facts what they should have been—instead of learning what they were?” how can he thus “pick historic order in pieces, and reconstruct it according to the newest fashions?” Is this “to accept all men and all systems in their own sense, and in their own spirit?” No doubt, the above is a very favourable view of the English Crown supremacy; but on the principles of his own lecture to me, the Reviewer is bound not to substitute any theoretical or abstract meaning for that which was actually attached to it. He is bound to accept it “frankly in the sense and in the spirit” of old Harry the Eighth himself.

If, however, the Reviewer is glad to relax his severe rule in favour of bald interpretations, when the credit of his own Church is concerned, he must tolerate some departure from it in the case of others. I repeat my conviction, that in all history, if we are to get at its deepest truths, we must cast aside many husks. Few conclusions require this right of rejection more than that very one to which the Critic comes on this question of the supremacy of the Crown in England. Whatever he may think of the extent to which I have used the privilege, no one of my conclusions has required such a free stretch of it as this. There is no passage in the history of Presbytery, in respect to which there is so wide a space between the meaning which was attached to it in fact, and the meaning which belongs to it in truth. In respect to the great principle "on the nature of the Church" on which the ideas of Presbytery and Arnold were identical,—the absence of a Priesthood,—the right of the laity—and their full association in all the affairs of ecclesiastical government, there is no paraphrasing of facts required at all—no distillation of a meaning which was not consciously entertained. It was acted upon from the beginning, but it was also very soon expressed, and nowhere better, or more forcibly, than in the letter to the Regent from the Assembly of 1574, which I have quoted in the text (p. 71, first edition : p. 69, sec. ed.) It is this which gave to the independence of the Church a strength which no government was able to overcome. And as it was by this that that independence was secured in fact, so also upon it alone does that

independence rest in principle. It was the foundation of its success; it is also the measure of its truth.

APPENDIX.—No. 2.

(PREFACE, Second Edition, p. viii.)

To argue on what ought, or what ought not to have been done by the two parties in the "Scotch Church controversy," seems to me very much like arguing what ought to have been the course of a mountain torrent. The course is determined by the declivity of the rocks and by the properties of water. If the rocks could have been persuaded to lie differently, and if the properties of water had not been what they are, the stream might have taken a different direction. But so long as the first retain their place, and the second its nature, the course is fixed. The Government of the time was very much like the rocks—as blind and as immoveable. The "Church party" was equally like the water—as headlong or precipitate. Indeed this is no rare case. The course of human parties is often governed by laws not unlike those to which inanimate things are subject. It is determined, not by reason, but by instinct and tendencies, which have very much the same power and effect as the properties of matter. How often does the march of events move steadily on to some destined end from which the wishes of all individual men, and the secret convictions of many, would turn aside if possible! A few partial—outskirt movements, which have no visible influence on the general advance, may be the result of argument and reason. But the impelling

power is inaccessible to such influences. Compounded as it generally is of hereditary opinion and hereditary passion—a strange mixture of principle, prejudice, and tradition, it takes the channel which opposing forces like itself compel it to take. It is in the events which are thus produced that we often see, almost as it were in bodily shape, the designs of God's Providence working through the free-will and responsibility of man.

There are, however, some general principles of great importance which may be considered in connection with the Disruption of 1843.

There is one very important and obvious consideration to be kept in view in reference to that event; and that is that a secession from the Established Church was not a victory but a flight.* I do not use the word in a disrespectful sense, because it remains to be discussed whether that flight could or could not have been avoided. I merely wish to point out the indisputable fact, that as the only question at issue was the independence of the Church "*as an Establishment*,"—i. e., its right as an Establishment to do a particular thing—that independence or right was not asserted, but abandoned by secession. No man ever doubted or questioned the absolute freedom of an unendowed body to do exactly as it pleases. The only principle in dispute was therefore sacrificed by a secession from the Established Church.

* In this remark I fully agree with the author of a pamphlet entitled "Observations on Church and State," which he has done me the honour of adding, were "suggested by the Duke of Argyll's Essay."

In former times such an abandonment was not possible. If it had been, the world would have had no such pattern of what an Established Church may be. During the whole course of its history, the liberty of that Church was being continually infringed. Before Knox himself had been yet laid to rest, it was compelled to submit to encroachments not only great but gross. These, however, it always repulsed, at last, by untiring perseverance in the exertion of its natural and constitutional powers. But for many long seasons it had to tolerate much of which it disapproved—always conceding what the “circumstances of the time” rendered it necessary to concede—always advancing every single step which those circumstances enabled it to gain. Thus, and thus only, can great constitutional principles be established. A General who is too passionate to retreat, or too impatient to tolerate delay, may be competent to fight a battle, but is utterly unfit to conduct campaigns. The old Scotch Reformers seem to me to have been great tacticians. The patient and steady determination with which they fought against the innovations of a hostile government, and by which, through long waitings and even some retreats, they gained those great victories which no subsequent convulsion could do better than restore,—is one of the noblest passages in the conquest of human liberties.

But what did this mode of conducting the fight imply? Or, rather, I should say, what did it exclude? To tolerate even for an instant—under whatever “circumstances,”—any law or institution forced upon

the Church by the hand of the Civil power, this, in the language of later fanaticism, was a horrible sacrifice of sacred principle to base expediency; it was a rebellion against Christ in His own House,—a compromise between good and evil—an alliance of Christ with Belial.

Can, then, the first generations of Reformers have believed this? Did they indeed compromise Christ's honour—did they betray the prerogatives of His kingly Crown?

If they did not, it must be because there is a wide range of questions touching the organisation of the outward Church on which it must be guided by general principles, and is not tied down to fixed forms with Levitical precision. It must farther be, because one of those questions is the exact amount of freedom which the Church may be able to retain in its connection with the Civil governments of men.

If, on the contrary, the Church at the periods to which I refer, *was* open to such tremendous changes, it must be on the ground that it may *never* suffer its connection with civil power to trammel its absolute and unconditional freedom on every matter, whether great or small, touching its own government and organisation.

I need not farther press the question how far this dogma can be reconciled with the course of the Presbyterian Reformers. But let us look for a moment how it can be reconciled with the nature of things.

The Presbyterian Church did succeed in extracting from the legislature an acknowledgment of its

independence, notwithstanding its connection with the civil power. The statutes of 1592 enumerate specifically the subjects over which that independence was declared to extend. What are they? "Heads of religion, matters of heresy, excommunication, collation, and deprivation of ministers." Now, let us take the very first of these—the most important of all—the most purely spiritual in its nature,—that, therefore, on which the Church could be least entitled to suffer any limitation on the absolute freedom of its power. Yet what did its connection with the civil law immediately do? The Heads of Religion which had been laid down in 1560—the "Confession of Faith"—was adopted and *embodied in a civil statute*. The same thing was repeated with the "Westminster Confession" at a much later period. Did then the Assemblies of the Presbyterian Church retain their absolute freedom concerning "Heads of Religion," despite a connection so close as this with the civil law? Did it remain competent to them to alter the Confession—the Heads of Religion—without violating the terms to which that connection bound them? Clearly not. If the Assemblies of the Church had objected to the wording, or to the sense, of any one paragraph in the Confession, they had no right to alter or amend it; because the civil law, in embracing as it were within itself the Confession, had necessarily withdrawn it from the free exercise of the Established Church's power.

What, then, are we to say of such a connection—such an Establishment as this? Was this tying down—this shackling of the Church's free power on

the most important of all matters—one which might prevent the removal, perhaps, of some erroneous gloss on the Word of God,—was this an abandonment of Christ's authority over His own House? If it was not, how, and why was it not? Evidently because the great question which a Church is required to answer to its Master is—not are there *any* matters on which connection with the civil law limits the exercise of its freedom, but—are *THE* limitations required such as in themselves are wrong; do they involve the doing of what is forbidden, or the not doing of what is commanded? *Some* limitation there must be in the very nature of things. No Church succeeded better in asserting its freedom, though connected with the civil law, than the Church of Scotland. Yet that connection did limit its power for many long years on matters of outward organisation, and *always* on the still more delicate matter of definitions of doctrinal belief.

I contend, therefore, that the Church may legitimately submit to limitations of its free power, provided those limitations do not involve either of the alternatives referred to. I contend farther, that those limitations may often become greater than they were originally intended to be, or than is convenient for the purposes of government and discipline, and yet fall far short of necessitating any violation of the positive law of God; and that, in such cases, it would be the duty of the Church—not to assert dogmas as to its own absolute freedom which are unsound in theory, and historically, as well as actually, untrue, but to exert its influence and its

constitutional powers to widen again the circle of its freedom.

This brings me to the great practical question respecting the Disruption. I have no hesitation in declaring my belief that the interpretation put upon the law of Patronage, as founded on the statute of 1711, did limit the Church's free power beyond the point which had been constitutionally fixed even under every previous law of Patronage, and still more as fixed by the Act of Security. But I have quite as little hesitation in declaring my opinion that that limitation was not such as to compel the Church to violate any Gospel law. It was not disputed that the Church courts might reject a Presentee if the parishioners brought any valid objection against his character, acquirements, or capacity.* But it was determined that the mere fact of objection without reasons assigned, could not, under the Statute referred to, be allowed of itself to be a sufficient cause of ejection. Those who believe that, *Jure Divino*, the veto of a majority of a congregation, without reasons, ought absolutely to determine against the appointment of a minister, are entitled, of course, to hold that this state of the civil law DID compel Church courts to violate a Gospel law. But such a

* By the more recent statute, known as Lord Aberdeen's Bill, objections of a vaguer nature may be given effect to under the sanction of the Church courts. How nearly the power of Presbyteries, under this Act, approaches to what Dr. Chalmers called the "*liberum arbitrium*," it would perhaps be difficult to define. Much would depend on the animus towards the Church courts, with which the statute might be interpreted by the Judicial courts.

Jus Divinum was rather a new and sudden light. I do not believe in it myself; and if the "Church party" had always believed in it, my difficulty is to understand—not why they seceded from the Established Church,—but why they ever joined it, or why they did not leave it sooner. But I hold it to be clear that the old Scotch Reformers did not believe in it; because although the First Book of Discipline used very broad language on the popular power in the choice of ministers, it distinctly declares that the Church courts, could not be said to "intrude" a minister when they "offered a sufficient man to instruct the people, whom they shall not be forced to admit before just examination."

But though I am convinced that the present state of the law of patronage does not violate any Gospel law, I am equally convinced that the movement which led to the "Veto law" was one rising from good impulses in the body of the Church. I think it took methods of expression which were at least premature as to time, if not somewhat rash in their own nature. Nevertheless, I repeat my profound conviction, that the existing law of patronage, as regulated by the statute of 1711, was not a law, either in itself or in its history, to which the Government or Legislature was entitled to sacrifice the unity of the Church. The view of lay patronage, as a mere right of property—a sort of investment of which it was unjust to individuals to depreciate the value—is one which, to my mind, is absolutely odious. As one mode of providing a fair initiative in the appointment of ministers, it is perfectly rational, and, under

certain checks, will work, I believe, fully as well as any other. But it is a right which, in point of principle, must be held absolutely subordinate to the peace and welfare of the Church; and even if this general view were disputed, the particular statute of 1711, having been passed since the Act of Security, and on grounds which are at best but plausible pretexts, was one which the Church was peculiarly entitled to consider as subordinate to its principles and its higher interests. I shall ever remember with pride that this view was adopted and acted upon by the late Duke of Argyll; and that his Bill, having been at once sanctioned by the General Assembly, was a means offered to the Government and Legislature by which the existence of the law of patronage would have been reconciled to the principles of many excellent and able men, and to the highest interests of the Church and of the country. That opportunity was not only suffered to escape, but was wilfully and deliberately refused by the government of Sir Robert Peel. I have already expressed my opinion of that policy; it is an opinion which I cannot express too strongly, and which every subsequent event and every subsequent reflection have equally confirmed.

I need hardly say that, on the general principles referred to in this note, I consider the conduct of the "Church party" to have been rash and precipitate in the extreme. They started dogmas which left them not only no retreat, but not even power to wait—dogmas which condemn the whole course of the old Reformers, and which I believe to be untenable in themselves.

As little, probably, need I say that many things were done by the opposition party, and by the Civil Courts, during the progress of the fight, which I hold now, as I held then, to be utterly indefensible. I believe them, however, to have been due to the passions which were then engaged, and which all such controversies invariably rouse. But I will not revive that controversy now. It is dead and gone, except for the illustration of great general principles, which are, in reality, not affected by much which was at the time most prominent.

Let the Free Church now set itself to the great works to be done in this country, and God speed it in all good endeavours. They are not more "free" to effect those works than that other Church, from which they seceded, may be, if it chooses. The Established Church is perfectly free enough to do all that is required of a Christian Church. It is infinitely more free than it was for many long years, during which the greatest men in the history of Presbytery were its patient ministers or its brave reformers. It can preach the Word as purely; it can "fence" the Sacraments as strictly; it can inculcate and obey every Gospel law; it can reclaim the lost. I am speaking of outward possibilities, and all Churches are equally dependent on the inward power. If it does all that the "civil power" does not prevent it from doing, it will do more of the Master's work than any "Church" on earth has ever done.

And if, at any time, any of its members should be terrified by such fulminations as those of the Free

Church Catechism—if they should fear that their Church is dishonouring Christ's Crown, or “interfering with His Headship,”—they need only remember that the same principles which lay this charge to their door, lay it also at the door of those who partake of the Communion in a kneeling, instead of a sitting, posture.

APPENDIX.—No. 3.

Whilst this edition has been passing through the press, I have read, with very great pleasure, an article on this Essay in the “North British Review.”* That article seems to me able, candid, and moderate. The consequence of the latter quality is that much of that which I have condemned as extravagant and fanatical in the Free-Church-understanding of the nature, source, and extent of “spiritual power,” is avoided or explained away. I need hardly repeat here, that the principle of the independence of ecclesiastical authority is one which I recognise as a true principle, when founded on the natural right of every society to govern itself, or when farther founded on the peculiarly sacred right of religious conviction to the fullest and freest toleration. There are an immense variety of different points of view, taken from the wide space which these great general principles enclose, in which the doctrine of spiritual independence may be presented in the strongest characters of truth. I have not contended against the principle

* No. XX, Feb. 1849, Art. VI.

when so founded, and when not stated with greater stringency than such bases justify. But I have contended, and do contend, against the principle being converted into a dogma,—not merely because the source to which it is thus referred is a wrong one,—but because a false understanding of its origin begets an idea as false and more dangerous, as to its nature, extent and bearing. I contend, in particular, that the independence of ecclesiastical Assemblies does not represent the “Headship of Christ,”—that that “Headship” is not the measure either of its extent, or of its inviolability; and that all the common language which so connects the one with the other as to represent a violation of the one to be necessarily a violation of the other also, is fanatical and untrue. I see, indeed, historically speaking, the connexion of ideas which led to the “Headship” being chosen as the best popular watchword under which to express the important rights which Presbytery was called upon to defend. But I have endeavoured to show that that connexion is not logical; and that from the undoubted fact that Christ is Head of the Christian Church, it does not follow that ecclesiastical Assemblies are always to be held absolutely independent,—still less that their *natural* freedom of action may never be limited, as a matter of arrangement. I have maintained that this latter dogma cannot be rested on the mere fact of Christ’s Headship; and that, if it be indeed a Gospel law, it must be proved to be so by a separate and independent process; and therefore, that to speak of the inviolable authority of general Assemblies as representing or partaking of

the inviolability of Christ's authority "in His own House" is the emptiest declamation, and expresses nothing but the passions or prejudices of the speaker.

I shall have every reason to be satisfied with the result of my argument on this subject, if all Free Church men adopt in future the line of defence taken by this Reviewer. He escapes from all the arguments and charges founded on the use notoriously made by Free-Church speakers and writers of the "Headship of Christ," by first denying that any such use is made, and next by adopting what appears to me to be substantially the same explanation of that celebrated formula which I have given in the Essay.

- The denial is broad enough: "We have not brought forward the doctrine of Christ's Headship as furnishing directly and immediately the proper ground or reason of anything we have done ourselves, or called upon others to do." Again: "We do not introduce the doctrine of Christ's Headship as affording a distinct and independent argument on which to rest our vindication" (p. 453), &c.* Now, with great respect to this Reviewer, I must distinctly contradict this assertion. Free Church men have been in the constant habit, both in speaking and writing, of using "Christ's Headship" as the direct and immediate ground and reason both of what they have done themselves, of what they have required others to do, and of the

* In another passage the Reviewer says, even more moderately and rationally (however incorrectly): "The truth is, we claim nothing more for the Church than the right of self-government as a distinct, independent, visible society." p. 450. Compare this with what I have said in the Essay, p. 158.

injunctions and denunciations they have directed against those who differed from them. They have been in the constant habit of using it "directly and immediately," and that, too, in forms of application so broad as to be most repulsive, and, as it seems to me, (however unintentionally) most irreverent. "Are you for Christ, or against Him?" was no uncommon form in which, at the time of the Disruption, the question was put whether an individual was to secede with the Free Church or remain in the Establishment. To this hour, when the heat and passion of that controversy is comparatively stilled, the ablest members of the Free Church, and its most authoritative documents, connect that "doctrine" with every conceivable opinion and dogma of Free-Church Prebyterianism so "directly and immediately," that the most trivial of these, on mere matters of form and ritual, are gravely invested with all the awe and authority of direct emanations from the "Crown Rights of the Redeemer."

I sincerely rejoice, therefore, to learn from this Review that the connection is now allowed to be somewhat more remote—that there are at least some intermediate steps of argument—that "the only inference directly or immediately derivable from the doctrine of Christ's sole Headship is that *every intimation which he has given of His Will* as the constitution and government of His Church, and the manner in which the administration of its affairs should be conducted, ought to be implicitly obeyed" (p. 453). Now, no Christian disputes this latter position. There is no occasion, therefore, to treat it as an "inference" from

the "Headship of Christ," because it is as obviously and as independently true as the assertion of that Headship itself. Indeed I see no other definite meaning attachable to the "Headship" at all, than that of the supreme authority of Christ's word and commandments. The one is not an inference from the other; they are but two separate forms of expression for the same thing. If therefore the Free Church dogmas are not directly and immediately connected with Christ's Headship, neither are they "directly and immediately" connected with the same truth expressed in another form—viz. the duty of obeying all Christ's laws. The first step, then, turns out to be no step at all. We are just where we were. Well, what comes next? The Reviewer proceeds to "admit farther," "that it is needful, in addition, (that is, in addition to Christ's Headship and the duty of obeying Christ's Laws) to establish from Scripture the doctrines of the exclusive supremacy of the Bible, AND, the exclusive jurisdiction of ecclesiastical office bearers, as involved in, or flowing from, the doctrine of Christ's sole Headship." What a course of argument is this! Let us look at the first of the two "additional" steps, or the two additional "doctrines" here specified. We are required to prove *from Scripture*, the exclusive authority of that same Scripture—that is to say, we are to start by assuming what is treated as requiring proof; the assumption is to form the basis of the proof, and the proof is to demonstrate the assumption. Really this critic lays down rules for the conduct of his own argument very much more hard and difficult than

I should venture to impose. I admit that he is NOT called upon to prove the exclusive authority of Scripture as an additional doctrine to the Headship of Christ, or to the duty of obeying His laws. All three are but three different forms of expression for one and the same acknowledged truth. The second of the doctrines which he calls additional is the only one really separate and distinct from the others; and this, I agree with him, he is bound to prove by a separate and independent process of reasoning. But in the very act of acknowledging this obligation he escapes from it by intimating that the doctrine in question is "involved in" or "flows from" the previous doctrine of the Headship. But this is just what he has formally and truly declared he is not entitled to assume. He has just admitted that the last doctrine is NOT "involved in" the first, by any "direct or immediate" sequence. He must therefore keep to this admission, and not evade it as he does in this interjected clause. This evasion is still more apparent in a succeeding sentence—"The Headship of Christ, then, is not to be regarded in this matter as a distinct and separate doctrine from the exclusive supremacy of the Bible, AND *the exclusive jurisdiction of ecclesiastical office-bearers.*" True, it is NOT distinct from the "exclusive supremacy of the Bible:" but it IS distinct from the "exclusive jurisdiction" of ecclesiastical office-bearers; and to couple the two latter together as they are here coupled, as equidistant from the "Headship of Christ," is but an indirect mode of doing that which the writer confesses ought not to be done,—to connect the "Free

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Church dogma " immediately and directly with the Headship of Christ.

I accept, however, (with some allowance for the assumptions quietly slipped in under the same forms of expression) the general definition given by the Reviewer of the true "use" made of the Headship—because it is a definition which very closely resembles that which I have given of its "use" in the text of the Essay, p. 164-5: "The right use and application of the doctrine of Christ's Headship in the present question, is not that it should be held forth as the direct and immediate ground of the precise argument by which the course pursued by the Free Church is to be defended against opponents, but rather that it should be *employed to enforce the importance* of the doctrines comprehended under it(?), and flowing from it(?), on which the strict argument more immediately depends,—to *impress* the deep responsibility connected with the faithful maintenance and the full and honest application of these doctrines, and to *animate and encourage* to an uncompromising discharge of the Church's duty with respect to everything involved in (?), or flowing from (?), or in any way connected with the 'Crown Rights of the Redeemer' " (p. 454). This seems to me to be but a cautiously-expressed form of confession that the phrase of Christ's Headship is—exactly what I have represented it to be—a good popular Watch-word for expressing *feelings*, rather than reasoning—for impressing on the mind a general sense of the religious value set by Presbytery on the particular objects for which its various contests have been carried on.

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And now I wish to thank this Reviewer for a portion of his article, which I think highly honourable to him, since in it he has shown himself above a temptation which is undoubtedly a strong one, and to which some members of the Free Church have been less scrupulous in resisting. In 1842 I published a pamphlet, entitled a "Letter to the Peers from a Peer's Son," in which I endeavoured to urge on the legislature the duty, "as founded on Considerations of Constitutional Law," of so modifying the Law of Patronage as to satisfy the principles of the then majority of the Church. I have never since regretted the part which I then took; and considering the two totally different points of view in which the subject is regarded in that pamphlet, and in this Essay,—or rather I should say the totally different subjects which are discussed—I hardly think there are any passages of the former which I would now retract or even modify. There are, however, very many passages which when not candidly quoted—that is to say, when quoted without reference to the argument then in view, may be easily misrepresented to be directly contradictory to the opinions advocated in this Essay. Those, however, who read that pamphlet, keeping in mind Dr. Candlish's excellent canon of interpretation, that "an author is an authority on the point on which he is writing, and not on any other point whatever"—and who farther bear in mind that "considerations of Constitutional law"—not of doctrinal truth—was the subject on which I was then writing, will be at no loss to see that there is not necessarily any contradiction whatever. The North

British Reviewer has alluded to the difference without unfairly representing it, as a contrast; and though he has drawn an inference which is incorrect, it is one which he has stated with great fairness. The passage to which I allude is as follows;—"In the Duke of Argyll's 'Letter to the Peers,' he referred to the 30th chapter of the Confession,* as clearly establishing the principles and claims of Free Churchmen,† without any intimation that he did not believe its statements to be in accordance with Scripture, but rather in such a way as seemed to imply that he regarded them as having the sanction of the Word of God, as well as of the law of the land." In support or illustration of this statement, the following quotation is made from the "Letter to the Peers :"—
"The Church has declared, and the Constitution has adopted the opinion, that her government resides exclusively in the hands of her spiritual office-bearers; and farther, that this separation of jurisdictions is not a mere result of human expediency, created and liable to be cancelled by human laws, but is one of Divine appointment, and essential to the well-being of both."
 The Reviewer then proceeds thus:—"It is true, there is nothing in his Grace's present opinions to preclude him from adopting this statement as it stands, but it is more than probable that if he had believed then as he now does, that both the Church

* The Westminster Confession.

† This is not stated with accuracy: "Free Churchmen" did not exist in 1842. Some of those whose "claims" I then supported never became Free Churchmen. Those claims could be supported on different grounds from those taken by "Free Churchmen."

and Constitution were wrong in holding this great principle to rest upon Divine appointment, he would have given some indication of this opinion" (p. 440).

Now, what the Reviewer here states as "more than probable" that I should have done, is exactly what I most carefully and intentionally avoided. It must be remembered that I have no doubt, even now, that the principle of spiritual independence, when properly understood, and properly limited, has Divine authority. But I had, even at the time I wrote the "Letter to the Peers," the strongest doubts whether it was not over-stringently stated, in the language of the Church party of that time; and, especially, whether they were justified in using the doctrine of Christ's Headship as they were in the habit of doing. That these doubts have become more definite and confirmed, I do not deny; but I never had any conviction that the doctrines of Spiritual independence, as then understood, could be legitimately represented as possessing the definite, abstract truth of a religious dogma. I knew that the General Assembly was rightfully independent in the government of the Church: but I never believed that that independence resulted from its representing Christ, so that its rights were those of the Redeemer's Crown. To this language I had, even then, the strongest repugnance. I will not now dispute whether the declarations of the Confession, and others adopted by the Constitution, justified that language, or whether those declarations may not be adhered to, without translating them in so extravagant a sense. But so careful was I, in the "Letter to the Peers," that I avoided, by every

possible precaution, committing myself to any implicit adherence even to those declarations, except as portions of "Constitutional Law." To such an extent did I carry this precaution, that I was exceedingly unwilling to quote the Confession of Faith at all, in consequence of its expressing the principle in a more doctrinal point of view than seemed to me relevant to the argument in hand. Whilst the sheets of the "Letter to the Peers" were passing through the press, I submitted them to the late John Hamilton, Advocate, a gentleman for whose memory I gladly avail myself of this opportunity of expressing my feeling of grateful and sincere regard. It was by his persuasion, and his persuasion only, that I introduced the quotation from the Confession of Faith at all; and I did so only on the ground—which he justly urged to me—that the Confession, having been embodied in the Statute-book, was part and parcel of the "Constitutional Law," which specially formed the basis of my argument. I believe it will be found that in hardly any instance have I quoted such declarations without some such qualifying clause as to indicate that the quotation was made solely with the view to the enforcement of a "Constitutional principle."

When I wrote that pamphlet, although a young controversialist, I was quite aware that it would be exceedingly foolish to indicate doubts which had no reference to the question then at issue, but which, nevertheless, might indirectly have had an effect injurious to that question on the mind of others. No subject could have been more inapposite either to the course of my argument, or to the nature of the

authorité to which it was addressed. The abstract truth of spiritual independence as a religious dogma was wholly beside the question with which I had to deal. That question was not, what *ought to have been* the independence of the Church, nor how that independence ought to have been defined: still less was it whether the words actually adopted were exactly expressive of an abstract truth. The only question I had to argue was—What is the established doctrine of the Church, the adopted principle of the laws, the hereditary ideas of the people? Given, what those principles were it followed, what the course of the legislature ought to be. Clearly any discussion on the abstract points dealt with in this Essay, would have been preposterously out of place. In constitutional arguments on other subjects, we might have occasion to take our stand on the position that the “King can do no wrong,”—an axiom which we are bound to believe as subjects, but are at liberty to doubt as Christians. He would be a very young reasoner indeed, who could not reiterate the maxim of the lawyer, without hinting the doubt of the theologian.

But very different are the circumstances now. The subject which was then, as it were, behind the scene, now stands in front, challenging close attention. It is the foundation stone of a new Church. That Church is represented by many able and earnest men, whose one distinguishing idea is that of “spiritual independence,” held as a religious dogma, and conceived in its extremest sense. To support the right of that body to spiritual independence,

before their isolation as a separate religious communion, it was enough to believe that that right *existed*—that it had gathered round it religious associations—that it had grown up in the heart of Presbytery, and had become part of its own idea of itself—that it coincided with the natural divisions of human government—that it had been guaranteed—that it was folly, even if it were not wrong, to violate its integrity. But to support the dogma of spiritual independence as understood by the seceding Church, you must believe that it exists in virtue of the fact (clear enough certainly), that Christ is Head of the Christian Church. You must believe that Churches which do not assert that right, or have partly compromised it, are either ignorant of the first rudiments of the Christian faith, or else are sacrificing its most sacred truth. You must believe, that to maintain that right intact, is to maintain the honour of Christ's Crown—that to infringe or limit it, is to deny His Headship. Those who dissent from such views of "Spiritual Independence," are now bound to state their views—to enter their protest. I have done so, because I believe them to caricature the truth, to be most fallacious and most illogical. I have done so also, because I believe them to misrepresent totally the meaning and origin of "Spiritual Independence" in the Scottish Church, and to narrow the broad and firm basis on which that independence rested.

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APPENDIX.—No. 4, p. 196.

I need hardly explain that in the words which I have here put into Cromwell's mouth,—I do not mean to assert, as a matter of fact, that he connected the idea of the freedom of individual conscience with that of "Christ's Headship." He generally went much more directly to his point. But I think the freedom of individual conscience may, by the process I have indicated, be connected with the idea referred to ;—that is to say—the principle of the spiritual independence of individual conscience, stands in very natural connection with the individual responsibility of every man to Christ as the great law-giver. The author of the Free Church Catechism thinks he has here detected that I have "a glimpse" of the Free Church use of the Headship. * This is quite true. I have long had a very clear "glimpse" of the fact that the idea of religious toleration, is that which alone gives a degree of speciousness to their use of "Christ's Headship," and which deceives many into the conviction that that "Headship" stands in "direct and immediate" connection with the Free Church dogma. But Mr. Gray must be perfectly aware that that dogma is by no means coincident with the mere idea of religious toleration, which is unquestionably a right belonging to every body as well as to every individual, inasmuch as what is true of every part is true of the whole. If this be the whole sum and substance of the Free Church dogma, it is a great pity for its own sake that it should be in the habit of expressing it so obscurely.

APPENDIX.—No. 5, p. 216.

It was not without a purpose that I have expressed the setting apart of special days for commemorative services, under the form of "setting aside other days, besides Sunday, for peculiar devotions." I knew the wonderful power of hereditary prejudice in adhering obstinately to certain particular forms of expression; and it was my object to suggest to Presbyterians that in the "keeping of holy days" there may be nothing which would not appear even to themselves, perfectly rational in itself, if described under another form of words. Accordingly, the author of the Free Church Catechism is very angry apparently, to find a practice which he denounces as an "interference with the Headship of Christ," expressed in such a form as to separate it from all the associations of prejudice, and to represent it in so reasonable a point of view. He reminds me, with some indignation, that the Presbyterian Church itself exercises habitually the right of appointing days of peculiar devotion. Very true. How then does Presbytery denounce, when done by others, what it habitually does itself? The answer is very curious. The fast days appointed by Presbytery do not recur always at the same date—they are not regular anniversaries. This makes all the difference between a practice perfectly legitimate, and a practice which is an interference with the Headship of Christ! If such days are appointed from time to time, they have the full warrant of the Word of God, but if they recur at regular

intervals, with a commemorative object, they are grievous sins!

In eliciting this answer, I must say that my object has been more than gained. I cannot argue the point with Mr. Gray, because I feel that we have no common ground from which to start an argument. Results which seem to me the broadest "reductio ad absurdum," seem perfectly natural and true to him. I can bring no disproof against his positions so effectual and decisive as that which he has repeatedly furnished himself. Nothing, for instance, seems to me a more obvious refutation of the whole system of dogmatism in reference to the "Headship," than the result that kneeling at the Communion is, on this system, an interference with that Headship.

I may here notice a complaint made by Mr. Gray that I have concealed or withheld the fact that all the Scriptural quotations for which I have censured his Catechism, are made exactly in the same sense by the Westminster Confession, as well as by many other authorities. In particular he has asserted that the quotation on which I animadvert at p. 212 (Mat. xvi. 19) is used for precisely the same purpose in that Confession. This, however, is incorrect. It is quoted by the Confession in support of the second section of Chap. xxx., but not in support of the first section. Now, the following is Mr. Gray's exposition of the first section: "It is a compound proposition, consisting of the main proposition and four subsidiary propositions . . . The main proposition is that 'The Lord Jesus hath appointed a Government.'" He then explains that the four "subsidiary propositions"

are, (1). That the Lord Jesus is King and Head of His Church. (2). That the government he hath appointed is 'in the hand of Church officers.' (3). That this government is 'distinct from the Civil Magistrate.' (4). That the appointing this government is an act of His Headship. Mr. Gray farther says that this "compound proposition" requires the authority of Scripture for "all its parts."

I do not know whether the Scriptural references are the same in all copies of the Westminster Confession. In that now before me the text in question is not among the passages referred to in support of the above "compound proposition." But if it had been, it would not have followed that it was quoted specially in support of one of the "subsidiary propositions" which go to make up the "compound proposition,"—*viz.*, the third. Yet this is the sense in which it is quoted exclusively by the Free Church Catechism. And not only is it quoted in support particularly of this third subsidiary proposition, but in support of that proposition differently expressed, and with a difference of meaning at least as great as the difference of words. (Cat. Q. 81).

Several of the other texts quoted by the Free Church in support of their version of this third "subsidiary proposition" are, it is true, likewise quoted by the Westminster Confession, either in support of the "compound proposition" or of some others connected with it. But if this "compound proposition" is susceptible of a different interpretation from that given by the Free Church,—and if its "main proposition" is separable from the "subsidiary proposition" to which

the Free Church particularly directs all its arguments—then, of course, there is no proof or even presumption that the quotations are made in the same sense.

I have no wish to conceal, however, that Scriptural quotations are made by the Westminster Confession as well as by many other Confessions in senses which appear to me illogical; and in particular I question strongly the propriety of quoting John xx. 23, in reference to the ordinary powers of the ordinary office-bearers of the Church. No doubt the danger of such an application is very much avoided when the sense of the text is explained away to refer merely to a declaratory power.

But the same explanation which removes the danger, does away with the use to which the text is frequently applied. If it is merely a declaratory power, depending entirely on the conformity of the “declarations” with that Word to which all have an independent access—then it ceases to be true that it is a power confined to the Ministers, Priests, or Office-bearers of the Church, except as the organs of its representative power. Every individual man has this power committed to him. He is not only entitled to “declare” his sense of truth, but it is his duty to do so. The truth is that the Priestly sense attached to this text is the only sense which makes it useful for the purposes to which it is generally applied; and though this sense is disavowed by Presbyterian and other Protestant Churches generally, when they are pushed to make the disavowal, it is practically retained, and found to be very useful.

Mr. Gray has bitterly complained that I have not reminded Englishmen that this text is made much use of in the English ordination service. He thinks it would lessen the impression of the extravagance of the Free Church if this fact were remembered. It seems to me that this text can be quoted with all logical consistency and truth by a Church which believes that its Bishops, in ordaining, are entitled to say—"Receive the Holy Ghost." If they are entitled to say this, there is little inconsistency in following it up by this farther address "Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained." But though such a Church may be entitled so to use this text, it does not follow that another Church is equally entitled to do so which professes to disbelieve that ordination confers the Holy Ghost. Mr. Gray, in particular, must not run for shelter to the English ordination service. He has asked, in his Catechism, the following question, and given the following answer:—
Q. 45. Who are they who detract from our Lord's prerogative as the Head of Influence? A. They that do so are such as hold that the grace provided for the Church IS DEPOSITED IN THE OFFICE-BEARERS or ordinances of the same; and such as hold that the power of dispensing grace, AND THE GIFT OF THE HOLY GHOST IS VESTED IN THE OFFICE-BEARERS.

With this admission, and many other Presbyterian admissions in his mouth, Mr. Gray is welcome to appropriate to his own use whatever he can of the English ordination service, and of the texts to which

it refers. So long as he continues to be held by the "anchors of John Knox" he cannot drift very far in the direction to which not a few of the quotations of his party would seem to point.

APPENDIX.—No. 6, p. 222.

The author of a pamphlet which I have before quoted ("Observations on Church and State") has severely objected to my assertion, that the Act of Queen Anne was in violation of the great Constitutional settlements effected after the Revolution and at the Union. The ground on which he denies this is somewhat narrow and technical. He says that the transference of the right of Patronage from the original holders to the Kirk Sessions of parishes, effected under the Statute of 1690, was made on the condition that those original holders should receive a pecuniary compensation; that, this compensation never having been actually paid, the Parliament of Queen Anne had, despite the Act of Security and the Treaty of Union, a right to restore Patronage to the original possessors. Now, in all the controversies respecting this Act, I do not remember to have seen this defence of the Statute of Anne dwelt upon. The truth is, that though this, and the asserted "heats and divisions" caused by the other system, were the *preamble-reasons*, they were not the real reasons, nor did they touch the secret motives of either party. It is now very well known that very

different motives actuated the government of Queen Anne ; and it is perfectly obvious that if the payment of pecuniary compensation to the old Patrons had been the only object in view, it might have been, without difficulty, attained.

But my objection to the Act of Anne is of a broader and deeper kind. I do not attach much importance to the mere transference of the initiative right of nomination from any one party to any other, provided the old constitutional limitations were retained over that right, and no new power of enforcement committed to the legal tribunals over the ecclesiastical tribunals of Presbytery. I believe, indeed, that the attempts at coercion made by the Court of Session, under that Statute, were in gross violation of constitutional law, and not justifiable even under the Act of Anne ; but on the supposition that that Act did justify them, or was meant to do so, I maintain it was “ manifestly, undeniably,” unconstitutional.

NOTES.

NOTE A, p. 27.

ALTHOUGH the First Book of Discipline betrays very crude ideas as to the functions of civil government in the "Purgation" of religion, as well as on other points, nothing can be more enlightened than its principles in respect to the maintenance of the Poor. These principles are laid down in the following passage :—

"Every several Church must provide for the poor within itself; for fearful and horrible it is that the poor, whom not only God the Father in His Law, but Jesus Christ in His Evangel, and the Holy Spirit speaking by St. Paul, hath so earnestly commended to our care, are universally contemned and despised. We are not Patrons for stubborn and idle beggars, who, running from place to place, make a craft of their begging, whom the civil magistrate ought to compel to work, or else to punish. But for the widow, and fatherless, the aged, impotent or lamed, who neither can nor may travel for their sustentation, we say that God commands His people to be careful; and therefore for such, as also for persons of honesty fallen into decay and poverty, ought such provision to be made that of our abundance their indigence be relieved. The stout and strong must be compelled to work; and every person that may (can) not work, must be compelled to repair to the place where he, or she was born—unless of long continuance they have remained in one place; and there reasonable provision must be made for their sustentation."

Thus both as respects the social, educational, and religious condition of the people, these remarkable men aimed at a real and thorough Christian Reformation. They were not dogmatists merely—wrangling Theologians. They were earnest practical Workers—breathing in every word they

addressed to the Government, the spirit of men devoted heart and soul to the removal of the evils which they saw around them;—evils in all the thousand forms which a corrupt Christianity had occasioned, and which only a purer Christianity could remove.

NOTE B, p. 31.

It would be difficult, perhaps, to express the fundamental principles of true Protestantism with reference to human authority in matters of faith, in language more clear, moderate, and judicious, than we find in the 21st Chapter of the Confession of 1560, entitled "Of General Councils, &c., &c."

"As we do not rashly condemn that which godly men assembled together, in General Council lawfully gathered, have propounded unto us, so, without just examination, dare we not receive whatever is obtruded on us by men under the name of General Councils; for plain it is, as they were men, so have some of them manifestly erred, and that in matters of great weight and importance. So far, then, as the Council proves the determination and commandment it may give by the plain Word of God, so soon do we reverence and embrace the same. But if men under the name of a Council pretend to forge unto us new Articles of our Faith, or to make constitutions repugnant to the true Word of God, then utterly we must refuse the same as the doctrine of devils, which draws our souls from the voice of our only God, to follow the doctrines and constitutions of men. The cause, then, for which General Councils convened was, neither to make any perpetual law, which God before had not made, neither yet to forge new articles of our belief; nor to give the Word of God authority, much less to make that to be His Word, or get the true interpretation of the same, which was not before by His Holy Will expressed in his Word. But the cause of Councils (we mean such as merit the name) was partly for confutation of heresies, and for giving public confession of their faith to the posterity following,—both which they did by the authority of God's written Word, and not by any opinion, or prerogative that they could not err, by reason of their General Assembly. And this we judge to have been the chief cause of general councils. The other was for the good policy and order, to be constituted and observed in the Church, where, as in the house of God, it becomes all things to be done decently and in order, not that we think any policy, or order

in ceremonies can be appointed for all ages, times and places; for as ceremonies, such as men have devised, are but temporal, so may they, and ought they to be changed, when they rather foster superstition, than edify the Church using the same."

NOTE C, p. 40.

The language and facts adverted to in the text, evince the readiness of the Reformers to ascribe to the "Civil" government a power, right, and even duty of interference with "Spiritual" concerns, and effectually disprove the fond imagination of the Free Church that their favourite dogma had been asserted from the earliest times of Presbytery. The "Constitutional Catechism" of that body institutes, on this subject, one of those narrow comparisons between the Reformation of its own country, and that which took place in others, in which religious parties are so fond of indulging their egotistical conceits. In accordance with the dominant idea of the document, to which I shall more particularly refer afterwards in the text, the Scottish Reformation is represented under the rather fanciful formula of an "Anti-Papal Testimony for the Headship of Christ." The Catechist then proceeds,—“Did all the Protestant Churches act as witnesses for the Headship of Christ when they rejected the Papal dominion? A. No. Q. Why do you say that? A. Because most of them acquiesced, to a greater or less extent, in the assumption, by other parties, of the ecclesiastical supremacy which had been wrested from the Pope. Q. Did the Church of Scotland do so? A. No. From the beginning she maintained that it was Christ's place that the Pope had usurped in the Church, and *she resisted all attempts on the part of others to intrude into it.*” Now—passing over the artificial form of all this phraseology, framed so as to suit the theory maintained,—I confine myself to observing that if the last sentence is meant to convey (as certainly it is) that the Reformers never allowed the right of civil rulers to interfere in spiritual things, it is directly at variance with historical truth. So long as the Scotch Reformers hoped that the exercise of civil power in spiritual things, would be in accordance with their own views of doctrine and discipline, they were urgent and clamorous for that power being put into operation. And I need hardly observe that if the exercise of that power was legitimate, its legitimacy did not depend on its being subservient to the dogmas of any set of men—whether

ministers or not. Nor did the Scotch Reformers wish it to be so. They urged the duty and right of "secular" legislation in spiritual things:—but they urged, at the same time, the duty of founding that legislation on an independent judgment of the laws and the truths of the Word itself. In so far as they did not urge this latter right, as belonging to the civil power, and assumed their own assemblies to be alone authoritative—in so far did they do exactly what they are asserted to have specially avoided—"ascribed to other parties (to wit—Assemblies) the ecclesiastical supremacy which had been wrested from the Pope." I do not mean to intimate any approval of the views of the early Reformers on the point I now refer to. Their idea of the power of civil governments in spiritual things, was subversive of the liberty of individual conscience—and it is most Providential that that hostility of the government towards them arose which prevented the two powers from acting in alliance. But I wish to show that the idea of an abstract, absolute, and dogmatic division between civil and spiritual legislation, or authority, was as foreign to the Scotch Reformation in fact, as it is at variance with truth in theory.

NOTE D, p. 98.

I conceive that the religious forms of expression adopted by Scottish Presbytery, in the assertion of its rights against the tyranny of James I., has had the most injurious effect in discrediting its cause among English writers. Yet I must also say that those writers have had ample materials before them for forming a more correct judgment, than that which they have generally expressed. It is surprising, for instance, to find Mr. Hallam, a most dispassionate thinker, and a most patient investigator of facts, speaking thus of the contest between the Presbyterian Assemblies and the corrupt Episcopacy which the Regents and the young King attempted to thrust upon the Church. "Some of the Bishops, as might be expected, stood out in defence of their dignity, and were supported both by the King, and *by all who conceived that the supreme power in Scotland, in establishing and endowing the Church, had not constituted a society independent of the Commonwealth.*" Elsewhere he observes, "Nor can we doubt that the gentry must, for the most part, have revolted from these insolent usurpations of the *Ecclesiastical Order.*"

It is evident, I think, from the facts I have related in the

text, that this sentence of Mr. Hallam totally misrepresents the real nature of the contest. He speaks as if the Assemblies of the Presbyterian Church were composed of Priests—of an order separated from the mass of the community; and as if the Government, on the contrary, had represented the interests and the opinions of the Commonwealth. The fact is precisely the reverse. The Assemblies of Presbytery were not the Assemblies of any Ecclesiastical Order. They constituted a national representation; and they were struggling *for* the interests, and *with* the opinions of the community, against the designs of a faction supported by foreign influence, and whose interests were directly at variance with those of the Commonwealth. It is strange, too, that Mr. Hallam shows himself perfectly aware of these facts. He himself describes the Church as “sustained by the voice of the people;” neither does he betray any ignorance of the fact that the Episcopacy for which this struggle was carried on by the nobles and the King, was a system of simoniacal corruption. The secret of the whole misconception is in the language which Presbytery adopted at this time in asserting its claims. Mr. Hallam cannot distinguish between that language and the language of usurping Priesthood in former times. I am not surprised at this. But I beg Mr. Hallam, and all future English historians, to give their sympathy to the Assemblies of Presbytery in their struggle against the government of James and Charles,—not because civil power may never interfere with the dogmas of ecclesiastical authority,—not because they allow the Scriptural arguments adduced by Presbytery itself,—not because they accept its religious dogmatism, or the authority of its irrelevant quotations,—but because they know those Assemblies to have represented the life, the genius, and the best interests of the Scottish people, and of Christianity itself, under the only form in which it could be a living faith *to them*. Last, not least, let them give their sympathies to Presbytery in that struggle, because there was no PRINCIPLE, political or religious, represented by the corruption of the Regents, or by the petulant ambition of James. Everything that was of any value in any part of that contest,—every hope of national life,—every love of freedom,—every desire of truth;—in short, every upward tendency in human society was ranged on the side of Presbytery in Scotland, and was at stake with its success. Opposed to it, on the contrary, there was nothing great or true; nothing but pride or passion—the instincts, rather than the desires, of men—selfish love of power, or the still more selfish love of money.

NOTE E, p. 144.

With the bitter animus shown by the editors of the "Spottiswoode Society," I am not surprised by any amount of historical misrepresentation, which the worst temper and feeling could lead them to indulge in. But it both surprises and grieves me to observe that I can adduce an illustration of the liberties taken with historical truth by Episcopalian writers in Scotland, from an author of no less standing than Mr. Tytler. In Vol. VI. (Third Edition) p. 302, when alluding to the renewed contest between James VI. and the Presbyterian Church which began in 1581, Mr. Tytler uses these words :—"The struggle between Episcopacy, WHICH HAD BEEN ORIGINALLY ESTABLISHED AT THE TIME OF THE REFORMATION, and the Presbyterian form of government was now assuming a more determined form."

Now, the only vestige of foundation existing for this statement, which is smuggled into an interjected clause, is the system of "Superintendency," the nature of which has been explained in the text, and which was not Episcopacy either in name or nature. Mr. Tytler has therefore clearly been betrayed into this inexcusable misstatement by the same craving which preys apparently on all the members of his communion in Scotland—to make out their own system to have been historically the national one since the Reformation.

I can only repeat my astonishment and regret that an historian of such just celebrity and standing as Mr. Tytler, should have lent his sanction, however indirectly, to views at once so childish and so false.

NOTE F, p. 151.

In this passage of the text I do not refer in particular to the avowed conversions to Romanism, which, under the influence of the new school of Anglican divinity, "became, under Charles," to use Mr. Hallam's words, "the news of every day." I refer rather to those vicious principles, and dangerous tendencies with which the party represented by Laud were then impregnated, and which, although they should have succeeded in keeping themselves separated from

the See of Rome, would have produced effects quite as dangerous when connected with that of Canterbury. I cannot here resist the pleasure of transcribing a fine passage of Mr. Hallam's "Constitutional History," in which he refers to, and admirably describes some of those tendencies to which I now allude. "They whose minds have never strayed into the wilderness of doubt, vainly deride such as sought out the beaten path their fathers had trodden in old times; they whose temperament gives little play to the fancy and sentiment, want power to comprehend the charm of superstitious illusions, the satisfaction of the conscience in the performance of positive rites, especially with privation or suffering, the victorious self-gratulation of faith in its triumph over reason, the romantic tenderness that loves to rely on female protection, the graceful associations of devotion with all that the sense or the imagination can require,—the splendid vestments, the fragrant censer, the sweet sounds of choral harmony, and the sculptured form which an intense piety half endows with life. These springs were touched, as the variety of human character might require, by the skilful hands of Romish priests, concealed under a lay garb, and combining the courteous manners of gentlemen with a refined experience of mankind and a logic in whose labyrinths the most practical reasoner was perplexed. Against these fascinating wiles the Puritans opposed other weapons from the same armoury of human nature; they awakened the pride of reason, the stern obstinacy of dispute, the names, so soothing to the ear, of free inquiry and private judgment. They inspired an abhorrence of the adverse party that served as a barrier against insidious approaches. But far different principles actuated the prevailing party in the Church of England. A change had for some years been wrought in its tenets, and still more in its sentiments, which, while it brought the whole body into a sort of approximation to Rome, made many individuals shoot as it were from their own sphere, on coming within the stronger attraction of another."—*Hall. Const. Hist.* (Fourth Edition) Vol. I. p. 472.

Have not the same tendencies been lately exhibiting exactly the same results? No change of time or circumstances can alter the identity of the human heart. The most striking passages in its history are being perpetually reproduced.

NOTE G, p. 159.

The expression referred to in the text is used in the first Confession of Faith, drawn up in 1560; but it is evidently not used in any sense connected with that which was afterwards attached to it. It occurs in Article 17, "Of the Church," and refers to the invisible or universal Church, "which contains of all realms, nations, and tongues." It is thus employed in a more strictly Scriptural sense than that which later Presbyterians have been in the habit of assigning to it, as may be seen by comparing with it the most prominent passages in which it occurs in Scripture, *e. g.* Ephesians i. 22, 23; Coloss. i. 18. I mention this use of the expression in the original Confession of Faith, because more than one hundred and twenty years after that Confession was written, this passage was referred to, both by Presbyterians and Episcopalians, as having been used in the same sense with which subsequent events had connected it, and from which it had become inseparable in their ears. I may here, also, mention that the same Confession of Faith was referred to at the same time as laying down, or at least referring to, the later Presbyterian dogma of the absolute separation between Civil power and Church power, because it speaks of obedience "to the supreme power, *doing that which appertains to his charge.*" But this passage, taken in connection with the immediate context, proves exactly the reverse. It occurs in Article 25, "Of the Civil Magistrate," in which it is declared that to him specially belongeth the "purgation" of religion. And it is in reference to the exercise of this power, thus ascribed to him in spiritual things—in reference to his right of suppressing erroneous doctrine—that the Confession proceeds to denounce those "who resist the supreme power doing that which appertaineth to his charge," as resisting "God's ordinance."

NOTE H, p. 173.

It was the object of this Assembly, as is well known, to settle the form of worship and government which was to fulfil the idea of conformity between the Churches of England and of Scotland. It is equally well known that the Independents were fortunately successful in defeating this artificial

imposition of Presbyterian forms upon the English people. The Confession of Faith, however, which was the result of the Assemblies' labours, was accepted and adopted by the Assembly and Parliament of Scotland, as the authoritative exposition of the Presbyterian scheme of Faith. It is, to this day, the Standard Confession of Scottish Presbytery. The doctrinal views do not differ from those which had been laid down at the Reformation, in the Confession of 1560. On those questions, not strictly doctrinal, but which, nevertheless, had so long been treated as almost of equal rank, we find the language of the Assembly as incongruous as its wishes. Two opposite forces were operating upon it. It was lured by hopes similar to those which had been cherished by the Presbyterian Church in the days of Knox: it was menaced by dangers similar to those which had threatened it in the days of Melville. First, it was impelled by the desire to see Presbyterianism enforced by the hand of civil power: next, it was agitated by the danger that that power would not remain a servant, but would become a master. Accordingly, one Chapter speaks the language of the First, another Chapter that of the Second, Book of Discipline; and the one can only be reconciled to the other by modifying the sense of both.

Let us look, for a moment, first to that side of the view which, if not most prominent, is at least most frequently referred to. Chapter xxx. begins by the assertion—"The Lord Jesus, as King and Head of His Church, hath therein appointed a Government in the hand of Church Officers, distinct from the Civil Magistrate." Presbyterians frequently quote this passage, as if it were an argument,* instead of being merely three separate assertions, between which there is no logical or necessary connection. When analysed, it is simply an assertion: 1st, Of the fact that Christ is King and Head of His Church; 2nd, That He has appointed a government in the hand of Church officers; 3rd, That this government is

* The word "as" (as King, &c.) is apt to suggest the idea "*in consequence of being*" as if Christ's appointment of a "distinct government," &c., were stated as a *necessary result* of His being King. The word "as," however, can here only mean "*in virtue of His power as*"—not that the particular exercise of that power referred to, was a necessary result of its possession; but merely that its possession is a result of the being "King." That the power has actually been so exercised, is, of course, a separate assertion requiring separate proof.

"distinct" from that exercised by the "Civil Magistrate." The first assertion is an indisputable truth,—although a truth of so indisputable and so abstract a nature that we must watch, with jealous care, the use which controversialists, and priests especially, may make of it. The second assertion is one which has much truth in it—enough to make it very easily received, and very incautiously handled—so that suddenly we may find ourselves committed to assertions which are not true,—but false. The third, also, is an assertion the truth of which depends entirely on the sense in which it is understood. That the sphere of ecclesiastical government is, to a great degree, "distinct"—as the Second Book of Discipline expresses it—"in its own nature" from the sphere of civil government, is obviously true. That this "distinction," arising out of the very nature of things, may be inferred from many passages in Scripture, is, of course, true also. But if it be interpreted in the extreme sense ascribed to it by Free Churchmen—that the distinction is one absolute and definite—that the right of ecclesiastical assemblies, in the government of the Church, is of such a nature as to represent the "Headship of Christ over His own House"—that it is a separation admitting of no compromise, and no exception,—in such senses I unhesitatingly declare my belief that it is utterly groundless and untenable, unsupported by the shadow of proof from any relevant part of Scripture;—unnatural, and at variance with the spirit of the Christian scheme;—and so repugnant to the true instincts of all men, that Presbytery itself has repeatedly and perpetually been flying in the face of its own dogma, whenever that dogma ceased to be serviceable as an entrenchment against assaults upon itself.

There is singular and abundant illustration of the view I have taken as to the real bearing of this dogma in the history of the Presbyterian Church, in the account which has been given us of this very Westminster Assembly—and of the framing of this very passage—by the Covenanted historian, Baillie. The Assembly, supported by the Presbyterian party in Parliament, and out of doors by the City of London in particular, made the most strenuous exertions to enlist the civil power of Parliament in the "spiritual" concern of enforcing Presbyterianism, even in its minutest dogmas and regulations, on the English people. The Independent party in Parliament, taking advantage of this disposition, exerted their influence strenuously to convert this civil power—thus appealed to by the Presbyterians themselves—into a Court

of Appeal from the abuses which they dreaded from the power of Presbyterian Assemblies. They could not understand why the power of Parliament, if legitimately occupied in enforcing the spiritual and ecclesiastical dogmas of Presbytery, should not be as legitimately employed in providing some safeguard against the abuses to which those dogmas might lead. Although the Independents were then a minority in Parliament, they exerted an influence far beyond their numerical strength, because they opposed theories which were rotten at the heart. They succeeded, therefore, in inserting into the ordinances of the Parliament sundry limitations and restrictions, which squeezed the Presbyterian system at such tender points, that the loudest outcries were wrung from the agonised Assembly. The interference of Parliament, in spiritual things, was perfectly legitimate in their eyes, provided it stopped short exactly at the point which they chose to designate as the term. But the moment it was pushed beyond this point—or rather, not beyond, but up to it, in a direction different from that which was agreeable to them—it was denounced with execration as “flat Erastianism.”

It was under these circumstances, that, in framing the Confession of Faith, the Assembly found itself arrived at the difficult and delicate Chapter which was to define their rather confused ideas on the distinction between civil and spiritual power. In a letter, dated March 17, 1646, Baillie, one of the Commissioners from the Scotch General Assembly, says, “In the Assembly (at Westminster) we are fallen on a **FASCIOUS PROPOSITION**, which has kept us diverse days, and will do so diverse more,—coming on the article of the Church, and Church-notes, to oppose the Erastian heresie, which in this land is very strong.” Baillie then proceeds thus, “**WE FIND IT NECESSARY TO SAY**, that ‘Christ in the New Testament did institute a Church-government, distinct from the Civill, to be exercised by the officer of the Church, without commission from the magistrate.’”

“*We find it necessary to say!*”—This is a full and accurate explanation of the origin of that passage of the Confession which, in the form I have above examined, reasserts that which Scottish Presbytery had very often “found it necessary” to assert before. What we find it “necessary to say,” we are very easily persuaded to be true*—and the more easily,

* I do not insinuate here, because I do not believe, that the Assembly adopted an argument which they *knew* to be fallacious,

when the necessity under which we say it, is the necessity of defending what really is true in the particular circumstances to which the saying originally referred, however untrue it may be in other circumstances, or when stated as an abstract dogma.

But now let us turn for a moment to a previous Chapter, and see what this same Assembly had "found it necessary to say" when the idea and the object before them had been to enforce the duty of Parliament to impose Presbyterianism on the English people.

Section 3 of Chapter xxiii. begins by asserting that the "Civil Magistrate may not assume to himself the administration of the word and sacraments," nor the "power of the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven." But it proceeds to say that "he has authority, and it is his duty to take order that unity and peace be preserved in the Church, that the truth of God be kept pure and entire, that all blasphemies and *heresies* be suppressed, all *corruptions and abuses* in *worship* and *discipline* prevented or reformed."

Now the power here ascribed to the "Civil Magistrate" may be everything or nothing, according to the conditions on which he is to be allowed to use it. He may be a mere instrument in the hands of others; or he may be an authority paramount in himself. If he is to follow implicitly the dictation of ecclesiastical Assemblies on what is and what is not "heresy" in doctrine, or "corruption" in discipline and worship,—he is a Slave. If, on the contrary, he is to use his own judgment on these questions, then he is a Master. It is stated as an absolute proposition that it is his "duty to suppress" heresy, and to "reform" worship and discipline. If, therefore, he is entitled to judge for himself on "matters of heresy" and of corruption in worship, he is at once constituted a spiritual Dictator. If, on the other hand, he is not so entitled, but is bound to abide by the decision of others, the spiritual dictatorship is transferred from himself to them. There is one other alternative. If, in the event of his disagreeing with ecclesiastical Assemblies he has no right of enforcing his own opinion, then it ceases to be true as a general proposition that it is his "duty" to act on such matters. He then can only act when he happens to coincide

merely because they felt it to be "necessary" to their position. This is a degree of recklessness very rare. I mean, that in order to support a foregone conclusion, they accepted readily any argument which could the better enforce it,

with others; and thus a Dissenting Civil Magistrate seems to be the only escape from a dogmatic enforcement of the "duty" of persecution.

But the last supposition was clearly not in the view of the Westminster Assembly. The "duty" of acting in the matters referred to, is laid down dogmatically. Everything therefore depends on whether this action is to be one independent or one merely subservient. The older Scottish standards, as I have shown, repudiated the authoritative power of Assemblies; and consequently implied an independent right of judging on the part of others. I must say that the Westminster Confession solves the difficulty with more liberality towards the Civil Magistrate than was prudent with Cromwell's parliament so close at hand. "For how does it explain that the "Civil Magistrate" was to perform the sweeping duties above assigned to him? For the *better* effecting whereof, he hath power to call Synods, to be present at them, and to provide that whatsoever is transacted in them be (what?—enforced?—No!) ACCORDING TO THE MIND OF GOD."

I confess that this paragraph of the Confession, taken by itself, would justify a degree of "Erastian" interference on the part of the "Civil Magistrate" which goes infinitely beyond any views of mine, as even allowable under any conceivable conditions of society. That He should be allowed to "provide" that everything done in "ecclesiastical Assemblies" should be according to (his conception of) the "mind of God"—and farther, to inculcate that it is his "duty" to "suppress" all "heresies" and "corruptions," is a "Confession of Faith" which would not have dissatisfied Henry VIII. himself.*

It is true, indeed, that the first part of this Section, above quoted, would preclude him from that particular *mode* of enforcing his decrees which is included under the expression of the "power of the Keys"—that is to say, he could not use ecclesiastical censures, properly so called. He could only insist on those who can use them, doing so on behalf of his own opinions, or in concurrence with them; and if they

* It must be remembered that Henry himself never assumed directly and personally, the "power of the Keys." He only forced others to use that power according to his orders. He did not ordain, or administer sacraments, or excommunicate. But he compelled the clergy and the people to act in their respective functions in obedience to him.

refused, the only resource seems to be "power of the Sword" against the refractory.

I am very much afraid that if the "Civil Magistrate" of that day had been persuaded to be exactly of the same opinion with the Westminster Assembly on "matters of heresy" and of corruption in discipline and worship, the fullest extent of the above powers would have been freely conceded to him against the non-Presbyterian minority.

It appears to me, then, that the Westminster Confession, when its different and contradictory parts are balanced against each other, leaves to Presbyterians a pretty broad margin on the very difficult or delicate questions to which the above two Chapters have respect. There are two extreme principles in respect to signing Creeds, Confessions and Articles. One is that they must be signed in the sense, as exactly as it can be ascertained, of those who drew them up. Another is that they are to be held as not binding strictly, but open to any interpretation which the individual mind may be able to extract, even though confessedly "Non-natural." The latter is a principle which it is difficult to reconcile with a love and desire of truth. The former is exceedingly vague and unsatisfactory. The rational principle seems to be to balance all conflicting statements by a careful reference to the several points of view in which the subject was regarded—to the circumstances of the time—and to an independent sense of truth. There are very few points even of purely doctrinal theology in which some room is not left, even by the most stringent definitions, for the varieties of individual mind. But on such a subject as that now under discussion, being absolutely incapable of anything even approaching to precise definition, I am not surprised to find that the Westminster Confession can only be reconciled with itself by a very considerable latitude of interpretation.

Free Churchmen, I suspect, must accept *cum grano salis* the declaration that it is the right and duty of the Civil Magistrate to "suppress heresies in doctrine," and to "prevent or reform corruptions of worship and discipline." When they sign this declaration, they must do so with a tolerably large allowance for private understandings. No allowance so large would be required, I think, by their brethren in the Establishment, who sign the declaration that Church government is "distinct" by Divine appointment from the Civil Government.

NOTE I, p. 198.

Since writing this portion of the text, I have observed some passages, in a speech delivered by Dr. Candlish in the Free Church Presbytery of Edinburgh, on the 2nd February, 1848, which indicate opinions on this period of the history of Presbytery, much more nearly coincident with my own than I could have expected to meet with in such a quarter. The Reverend Doctor is combating a proposal made by a brother Presbyter, that the Free Church should reconsider a decision of its General Assembly in favour of accepting the aid of Government in the cause of popular education, as offered under the well-known Education Scheme. The Presbyter referred to objects to the Free Church implicating itself by such acceptance in an unholy "alliance" with an "Apostatising Government." The Reverend Gentleman quoted, as usual, texts of Scripture to support his position; and one of those which he refers to as applicable to the case in point, is—"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath light with darkness?—and what concord hath Christ with Belial?" Another text quoted, with the same view, and as still more specially applicable to an "Apostate Government," is—"If any man that is called a brother be an idolater, with such an one not to eat,"—and so on. Dr. Candlish answers Mr. Moody Stewart in a speech of very great ability and force. He says—"Now, I frankly confess that I regard with extreme jealousy this summary way of applying Scripture—that of bringing a single text to bear on the relations of men and of society." He urges on his brother that texts so separated from their contexts, give rise to the "utmost possible perversion of authorities"—that "an author is an authority on the point on which he is writing, and not on any other point whatever—that he challenges Mr. Stewart to produce a single instance, in the whole Epistle to the Corinthians, from which the passage on which he founds his argument is taken, *in which the relation of the Church to the State is even pointed at.*" Proceeding from these able and judicious remarks on the particular instance of text-quoting tendencies before him, Dr. Candlish refers to it, and the subtle questions originating from it, as a

"rock" most dangerous in the future course, as it was before in the former course of the Presbyterian Church, and particularly refers to the dissensions and schisms it occasioned at the very epoch to which my remarks refer—schisms which would unquestionably have proved still more disastrous and fatal if General Assemblies had not been suppressed by Cromwell. I would now, with great deference to the subtlety of Dr. Candlish's mental power, and to his extensive acquaintance with the text of Scripture, submit to him whether his own excellent canons of quotation would not be very usefully applied to the language of less excitable members of the Free Church than Mr. Moody Stewart.

The distinctive dogma of the Free Church, is the absolute and sacred distinction between ecclesiastical power, and civil or secular power, and between the authorities to which these two powers respectively belong. The whole body are accustomed to describe the maintenance of this distinction as the maintenance of the "Headship of Christ"—of the "Crown Rights of the Redeemer," and other phrases of similar import. Now that "Christ is Head of the Church," is a Scriptural phrase; but as used in Scripture, it has no reference to the relation between Church or State, nor does it even "point at" any such distinction as that which it is extracted to apply to. If this be so, it is an unscriptural application of a Scriptural expression—fully more delusive than that made by Mr. Stewart of the text in Corinthians. I have never seen any proof adduced that the "Headship of Christ," as used in Scripture by the Apostles, had any reference whatever to the principle to which the Free Church applies it. I should be very glad to see such proof adduced by Dr. Candlish. At present, I cannot help addressing to him, and to all the members of the Free Church, the same question in reference to their favourite texts, which Dr. Candlish himself puts to Dr. Stewart, in allusion to *his* texts—"Who does not know that the common craft in controversy is to quote a man as deciding, in a single sentence, a question which possibly was altogether out of his mind, and which was not within the range of his thoughts when writing the sentence?" I would retrench only one word from this quotation. I do not accuse the Free Church of "craft." Generally speaking, its members, looking at the "Headship of Christ" as an indubitable truth, transfer the same certainty of conviction to the separate dogma which hereditary associations have accidentally connected with it. But I hold the connection to be purely artificial, and arbitrary, and that no

reasoning process leads from the one to the other. And not only has Dr. Candlish himself frequently used Scriptural language in a manner most obnoxious to his own excellent canon of interpretation; but I apprehend he, as a member of the Free Assembly, has given his assent to the language of the Constitutional Catechism of the Free Church, in every page of which almost Scriptural texts are quoted, in senses which they not only do not support, when taken in their natural connection, but with which they have absolutely no relation whatever. Of this I shall give some illustrations hereafter.

In respect to the particular expression of the "Headship of Christ," as applied to describe the Free Church dogma, there is but one way in which any connection can be established. If that dogma be really a true doctrine—if it be proved that an absolute and invariable distinction between Church power and Civil power is a law or ordinance of God—then those who break this law may, in one sense, be said to violate His Headship; that is to say, violate His authority. But in no other sense than the same expression might be used to describe the violation of any other law of God. Now, what would we say of the propriety of a man's language, who spoke of a thief, or a slanderer, as a violator of "Christ's Headship?"—of the "Crown Rights of the Redeemer?"—and so on. Would not this be a fantastic, artificial, and perverted way of describing his delinquency? Yet there is just as much connection between one law of God and "Christ's Headship," as between another law and that Headship.

NOTE J, p. 212.

I have sufficiently indicated in the subsequent text the grounds on which I conceive that the Scripture here referred to, can have no rational connection with the dogma to whose support and illustration it is applied. The same objections apply with still more pointed and obvious force to the next quotation made by the Catechism with the same view—"Whose soever sins ye remit they are remitted, and whose soever sins ye retain they are retained." (John xx. 23.) I am astonished that any Presbyterian can quote this passage as applying to the ordinary powers of the ordinary "office-bearers" or Assemblies of the Church. It seems sufficiently

clear that these words of Christ referred to extraordinary gifts and powers conferred on those extraordinary ministers of His Gospel to whom they were addressed—the twelve Apostles. The Scotch Reformers have reiterated their assertion that no earthly governors or authorities of the Church—no Assembly—no Council—have the smallest claim to such powers as are here referred to, or even to powers greatly inferior in degree, such as that of authoritatively interpreting the Word of God. But this most illogical and somewhat irreverent use of Scripture passages for bolstering up a theory to which they do not even most distantly refer, is of course a very natural and almost unavoidable consequence of attempting to assign doctrinal rank to principles which are not entitled to it. In this way the amount of straining and forced interpretation found requisite to give it this rank, may be a good clue to the fallacy of the reasoning; and I therefore take this opportunity of making some general remarks on the line of argument pursued by the Constitutional Catechism of the Free Church, which, so far as I know, is the only definite and systematic exposition, and proof, of its favourite principle.

I must beg my readers to keep before them the real dogma which this document is intended to prove and illustrate. This dogma I may define to be, that there is an absolute, sacred, and inviolable distinction between Church power and Civil power, and between the two authorities to which these have been respectively committed.

It is very important that this simple definition should be borne in mind, because Free Churchmen are in the habit of confusing it by arbitrary appropriations of Scriptural expressions, with which it has no connection whatever, or at least with which they are bound to prove the connection before assuming it. For instance, a Free Churchman might tell us that the doctrine the Catechism is intended to prove is the "Headship of Christ" over the Church,—assuming that if this Headship be true, their favourite distinction must be true also. I have no doubt that many Free Churchmen make this assumption in the most perfect simplicity of heart; but whether made in simplicity or not, I only desire to point out that it is an assumption—an assumption, too, of the very point which they are bound to prove. The question is not whether Christ be, or be not the "Head of the Church," but whether *it follows* from this indubitable fact that there is the absolute distinction referred to, between Church power and Civil power, and between the authorities to which these are

respectively committed. Let us now look for a moment how the Catechism succeeds in this proof.

It is divided into four chapters; of which, however, only one—the second—can be said to be directed at all to the point in question. The other three are subsidiary and illustrative; the first being merely a general definition of the senses attached to the word “Church,” whilst the third and fourth are directed to show the modes in which the Presbyterian Church has maintained or embodied the dogma which is laid down and supposed to be proven in the second chapter. But even with the second chapter the impartial student must have great patience. He must wade through a good half of it before he comes to anything like a discussion of the real point at issue. In accordance with the habit of Free Churchmen, to which I have alluded, the whole previous half of the chapter is devoted to prove—what no Christian doubts,—that Christ is Head and Lawgiver—the source of “Knowledge,” of “Influence,” and of “Authority”—in the Christian Church. In proving all this, which I am sure the Pope himself would not dispute, the writer evidently believes faithfully that he has advanced a long way in proof of the peculiar dogma of his Church—and it is very natural that he should think so, since from the time of the Covenant downwards, Presbyterians have been accustomed to regard the doctrine and the dogma as synonymous. But of course, in discussing so grave a question, no such assumption can be allowed. There is no purpose gained, except that of confusing the whole argument, by adducing elaborate proof of a point which nobody disputes. We require that—starting from the “Headship” of Christ of the Christian Church as an axiom,—proof be adduced that *from this truth the Free Church dogma legitimately follows*; and we require farther, that this proof be not crammed in, as it were, sideways, by way of illustration or assumption.

Yet none of these fair and indispensable conditions of the argument are abided by in the Catechism. I have said that one half of the second chapter contains no discussion at all of the real point at issue. But even when we do reach this discussion, the question is not put fairly and directly, but, on the contrary, under a form involving numerous assumptions. In the first place the very title of the section shows that we are considered as discussing whether Christ be, or be not, the “Head of Authority” in the Christian Church. In the second place, the question is put in such a form as to involve extensive assumptions on the most important points.

The question which comes nearest to a fair discussion of the dogma is as follows :—(Question 81)—“ By what arguments do you prove that the office-bearers of the Christian Church are alone entitled to administer its government ? ” Now it is clear that if such proof were ever so ample and convincing, there would remain numerous other points to be proved before the Free Church dogma could be reached. Who are the said office-bearers ? Are they an order or a caste separated by some visible mark from other men ? Or are they, on the contrary, merely the representatives of the Christian people ? If they are the latter, and not the former, wherein lies that absolute and eternal distinction between them and those *other representatives* of the same people, who may form the legislature or the “ government ? ” Does this distinction depend only on the *distinctive purposes* for which they are respectively appointed ? If so, then may not these purposes be conjoined, should certain conditions of society make it possible or advisable ? May not Christian legislators in certain circumstances be the best “ Office-bearers ” of the Church, and as the representatives of a Christian people, be entitled, and called upon, to govern therein, apart from—aye, and in defiance of—other bodies who claim a more exclusive right ?

Thus, after Free Churchmen have answered the question of their Catechism to their own fullest satisfaction, they have numerous other questions to solve ere their dogma is established ;—more even than I have here suggested, as those who have attended to the subject will be at no loss to see. In numbers of these intervening steps I have an assured conviction that the requisite demonstration would break down hopelessly, leaving the dogma to appear as the vainest imagination. For it must be remembered that that dogma is so stringent in its nature, that it demands the most stringent evidence in its support. If there are *any* cases, under *any* conditions of society, or of the Church, under which it is the right and duty of a Christian legislature to interfere with the action of those who, in ordinary times, carry on the machinery of Church government, and to exercise their power in that government, whether as regards discipline or faith—if, I say, there be any such cases, the Free Church dogma falls absolutely to the ground. The question of the distinction between “ Church power ” and “ Civil power ” becomes then a mere question of arrangement—to be determined by the circumstances of society in each particular time and place. And if the principle be no longer

expressed in a dogmatic form, or arbitrarily associated with Scriptural language with which it has no connection, I for one am ready to uphold the distinction as of great value in ordinary times, and especially important in our present condition of Christian society.

But to return to the Catechism. I have no objection to discuss its question, overlooking all the assumptions involved. I have no objection to understand the "office-bearers" of the Church to mean exclusively those who hold some ordinary ecclesiastical office, and to proceed to test the offered proofs that to them belong "exclusively," and by Divine Right, all the powers of its government. The first texts quoted are those on which I have already animadverted, at the beginning of this note, and in the Essay, as so clearly and so wholly irrelevant. The "power of binding and loosing," "of retaining and remitting sins," are gravely claimed as belonging to the office-bearers of Presbytery, in virtue of Christ's address to the twelve Apostles. I need not show, to my English readers, the manifest absurdity of such pretension; nor need I now repeat the grounds on which I have shown it to be a glaring violation of the most fundamental principles of the Presbyterian Reformation. These, however, are not the only texts referred to. There is a considerable list of them; but, as might be expected from those put in front of the battle, they have all the most remote possible connection with the point at issue. They show, indeed, what I am sure no man would be disposed to doubt, that the Apostles of the Christian religion, in the midst of a Pagan world, addressed their exhortation, their rules, their commissions, and their promises of blessing, to the "office-bearers" of the infant Church, whom they had either themselves appointed, or allowed to be chosen by the believing people—and that they did not address themselves on these points to the pro-consuls of Roman provinces, or to the generals of Roman legions. This, of course, the references of the Catechism succeed in proving. But what all this has to do with the relation of "Church" and "State" in Christian times and countries is very difficult to see. When I am referred, for instance, to the twentieth chapter of the Acts, at the seventeenth and following verses, I am certainly reminded that when Paul was about to leave the Christians at Ephesus, he addressed himself to the "Elders" among them as the "Overseers" of that Church, and also that even among these overseers, although probably appointed under peculiar guidance and direction, he foretold that corruption and

"perversity" were soon to enter; but when I am told that these verses illustrate the dogma that none but such "overseers" were ever to be trusted with any power in the government of the Church, and especially that Christian legislatures may never also act as "overseers" in the things of their religion, however "perverse" its more ordinary "overseers" may be, I confess I regard such logic as hardly worth the trouble of refutation.

Yet this is quite as much to the point as any of the remaining texts; and I am glad to observe that the same principles of interpretation on which they seem to me to be all irrelevant, are admitted to prove irrelevancy, at least in respect to one of them, by no less an authority than Dr. Candlish himself. I have already quoted, in a former note, a passage of a speech of this reverend gentleman, in the Presbytery of Edinburgh, in which he objected to a co-presbyter's application of a passage in the second Epistle to the Corinthians, in these words—"I challenge Mr. Stewart to produce a single passage in the whole of the Epistles to the Corinthians, in which the relation of the Church to the State is even pointed at." Yet I find a quotation from one of these Epistles among the array of texts which are marshalled in the Catechism, as bearing on the Free Church dogma respecting that relation.

I shall here only specially refer to one more of these texts. The answer to the question above quoted, concludes thus—"And, in fine, Christ has drawn the line of demarcation between the provinces of Church and State, so that the rulers of the one may not cross the boundaries of the other, by his memorable language to Pilate, 'My kingdom is not of this world.'" I can only say that I cannot conceive any rational man quoting these words as having any bearing—as even "pointing at"—the relation between "Church" and "State"—that is to say, between the ordinary office-bearers of the Christian society, and Christian magistrates or legislatures. Taken in connection with the particular circumstances under which they were spoken, they intimated that the Sovereignty or Kingship which Christ claimed was not of a kind to interfere with the authority of even a Pagan ruler. Taken in their largest and most spiritual sense, they intimated the spiritual nature of Christian Truth, of Christian Hope, and of Christian Duty—they intimated that earth was not the scene on which that Truth could be fully known, that Hope realised, or that Duty perfectly fulfilled. Taken in the most limited sense which can fairly be attached to them, they may be said to

ring off, as it were, the whole region of religious faith from the intrusion of any human authority—not more from that of Kings or Priests, than from that of General Assemblies. In this sense they point to that distinction which is essential in the nature of things, between our outward and our spiritual life. They proclaim a fact, rather than lay down a law. It is a fact, however, on which many laws securely rest, and first and foremost that great law, to which our Lord may allude in the succeeding words, "Then would my servants fight." His servants were not to propagate Christianity by the sword; they were not to impose belief by force. Hence the right of toleration—the sacredness of that "kingdom" which is "within us,"—the right of the soul to exemption from the control of physical force. But though in this sense the words of Christ refer to a distinction between two spheres of human life, they do not divide between two sets of men, committing to one set the exclusive government of the one sphere, and to another set, the government of the other. They make spiritual government, indeed, a very different *thing*, "in its own nature," from material government, because they annihilate all human authority in the former, or reduce it to a mere right of ordaining all things to be "done in decency and order." But if this great distinction be kept in mind between the nature of the legislation competent in the one case, and that competent in the other, there is nothing in the words which can possibly enforce a dogmatic separation between those who deal with each. Other texts may do this, but this text does not. The distinction it establishes is not one between the "kingdoms" both of the world, as well as in it. It is a distinction between one kingdom in which no human authority, properly so called, exists at all, and another in which it does. In short, it is one of things, not of persons.

So far, then, as these texts go, I hold that there is no particle of proof offered in support of the Free Church dogma, that there is an abstract and sacred distinction between two parties to whom Church power and Civil power are severally committed, each to the absolute exclusion of the other. There are some positive objections which have been urged against the truth of this dogma—those, however, which seem to me the very weakest—which this Catechism attempts to meet. And in respect to one of them, my readers will be amused to find the antithetical use made by John Knox, and modern Presbyterians, of the same Scripture precedents. It is well known that the Jewish Kings, on many occasions, exercised their

power in regulating and governing the ancient Church of Israel. The Catechism answers this by rather a long explanation, the chief point of which seems to be that the Jewish monarchy was a "type of the kingly office of Christ"—that the Kings were sometimes inspired prophets, &c. &c. Now, what use did John Knox make of reference to the same facts? He demanded of his followers in Scotland whether they "dared" argue that the exercise of civil power in matters of religion, legitimate "even under Aaron's Priesthood, which was the type of Christ himself," had become illegitimate now, when that Priesthood had been done away—that the civil power "had *now* become so profane in God's eyes as to be secluded from all intromission with matters of religion?" John Knox and the Catechism are thus at sad variance; and though I think all references to Old Testament history are to be received with great caution, as applicable to controversies in the Christian Church, yet I confess that in this instance John Knox appears to me to have not only far the best of the argument, but to have touched on the very principle which is absolutely fatal to the Free Church dogma. It is because there is no Priesthood like that of Aaron in the Christian Church—because there is no sacerdotal office or authority connected with, or necessary to, her worship,—that there has ceased for ever to be even the means of constituting an absolute or necessary separation between Christian Church governments and Christian State governments, or any earthly body possessing exclusively the government of the Church as representing the Headship of Christ over it.

I cannot, of course, in the limits of a note, follow in detail the remainder of that extraordinary document—the Constitutional Catechism of the Free Church. But it is the less necessary to do so as I have already examined the only attempt at proof of the real point at issue as regards the dogma on "Church and State." There are, in other sections of the book, innumerable arguments built on premises which have never been proved, and almost as many premises which if granted would not justify the consequences deduced. There are, however, some points of principle, more important than mere logical fallacies, in which the prevailing dogma shows a tendency to lead astray from some cardinal doctrines of the Presbyterian Reformation, and of abstract truth. To indicate what these are, I need only direct attention to some ideas which are, if not logically, at least naturally, connected with that of the Free Church dogma. For instance—if a

government has been constituted for the Church with such absolute and sacred distinction from, and independence of, all other authorities, we naturally feel that its *powers* must be of corresponding sanctity and importance. We expect that so remarkable and sacred an organisation would not be created as the receptacle of ordinary powers. Hence, there is a temptation to those who hold the Free Church dogma, to exalt and exaggerate the nature, the extent, and the power of ecclesiastical authority. And here is the secret of such texts being quoted as those respecting "binding and loosing, retaining and remitting sins." Such extensive and sacred powers are felt to harmonise admirably with the assumed sacredness and distinctiveness of Church authority. If you cross-question a Free Churchman closely you will compel him to reduce the "binding and loosing"—the "retaining and remitting of sins" to the humblest power of ordinary discipline which must belong to every society having any organisation at all. Here we feel the value of John Knox, and of those anchors of principle which he flung into the heaving deep of religious change. We can force every Presbyterian to acknowledge that no Church government can "bind or loose" any single Christian in his judgment of the truth; or is gifted with any power even to declare that truth authoritatively, because none can be exempt from error and corruption. But despite all these confessions he is conscious that his dogma is the better of the *sound* of the words of those memorable texts.

But this is not all. Besides the temptation to exaggerate and mystify the power, there is a similar temptation to separate mystically and superstitiously between the *rulers* and the *members* of the Christian Church. If Church Government is so sacred an authority and so absolutely distinct from Civil Governments in all cases, it is natural to expect that there must be some great visible distinction constituting rulers of the Church. It would be dangerous to admit that they govern only as representatives of the Christian people, since in that case it might be difficult to maintain the necessary distinction from Christian Legislatures. Accordingly, there has always been a tendency amongst those who have held the dogma of the absolute independence of ecclesiastical rulers, to maintain as part of their system some mystical right of office which may seem as distinct as possible from the title constituting every other. I see this tendency in the Free Church Catechism, and I am not surprised to do so, since it is a true instinct that their dogma has need of

such support. I do not mean that this attempt is consistently maintained. No! thanks to John Knox again! His anchors are perfectly invaluable. Cross-question the Free Churchman and he will be obliged to own that there is no invariable rite constituting ecclesiastical office, or conferring ruling power. He will be obliged to tell you that even ordination was rejected by Knox as a needless ceremony, and that besides those spiritual qualifications on which no human eye can pronounce with certainty, the fact of public commission from the body of the Church alone constituted the Presbyterian Minister. You will not get him to this point without numerous attempts to mystify and evade the question. He will tell you of three things as necessary to constitute the ministerial office—an inward call,—an outward call,—and formal admission by the “rulers of the Church;” and feeling that it is hardly safe to trust his position to any one of them singly, he will evince a desire to distribute the *onus* as much as possible amongst them. The reason of this is obvious. Two of them are reducible to very simple terms. The “call” by the people is, in plain language, popular election. It is declared to be so in so many words by the “First Book of Discipline.” So far as the office depends on *this*, therefore, it does not stand on a sufficiently separate basis from *other representative offices*, to harmonise with the mysterious authority and independence ascribed to it in the dogma. Then comes the admission of the “rulers of the Church.” This too, thanks to John Knox again, we can also reduce to very simple terms. It is merely examination as to qualifications of life or of learning, such as must be had before any man, in any organised society, can be admitted to its offices. It is what John Knox called “approbation of the learned:” clearly, then, neither of these two titles to office can be very safely trusted as the basis of such extraordinary authority, or such independent position. There is, as it were, a commonplace nature about them, which is quite fatal to any mysticism, and to any abstract or necessary distinction between an office so conferred, and other offices also based on the representation of a Christian people.

One only title remains—and to this we shall find our friends retreating, as the safest, because the least tangible and accessible. This is the *inward call*—the spiritual call which justifies a man in seeking the ministerial office. But who can judge whether this call exists or not? Can we enter into a man’s soul and read the secrets there? No! Then if it be *this* call which alone confers ministerial authority and power,

we cannot certainly know where that authority exists—who the men are to whom it belongs. Among a numerous ecclesiastical body, there may be some—or many—who possess it not. And if in such a body there be none at this moment who have it not, we cannot tell how soon, or how completely it may be lost. Corruption and perversity may enter, at first among a few only—at last overspreading the whole. Is it possible, then, that so absolute an independence, so sacred an authority, can rest upon such a title? No—this too must be abandoned like the others.

But even if it be not,—if the Free Churchman should return—not to any one of the three titles to office,—but to something amongst, and between them all, as that which constitutes the office, and confers the powers of a minister, we can remind him that it is not to this office alone, or even principally, that the Presbyterian Reformation committed the government of the Church. He may exhaust every art in keeping out of view the representative nature of this office, by a dexterous use of the three titles, inward call, outward call, and ministerial admission—by making one assist the other,—by endeavouring to stand on none separately, but on all conjointly—or lastly by confronting the acknowledged principles of the Scotch Reformers, and laying a mystical stress on the ceremony of ordination. But when all is done, how is he to explain the powers assigned in the Reformation to the office of an “Elder?” Cross-question him on this point, and you will find that here, at least, he cannot escape from the plain, simple principle, of ruling power being conferred by representation, and by it alone. He will be forced to admit that the First Book of Discipline enacted not only that elders were to be elected by, and from among, each congregation, but that this election was to be annual, lest a longer tenure of office should induce men to “presume on the liberty of the Church.” And now let us push on our cross-examination—and ask what are the powers attached to this office, thus constituted simply by the free election of a Christian people? He will be compelled to answer that these powers included the highest powers of Church government, and discipline. They were even placed above the minister himself. They were to watch his life, his diligence, his orthodoxy—and if he be worthy of deposition, they, with consent of the Church and Superintendent, might depose him.” But it was not only in this sphere that the elders exercised these high powers of discipline and government. Of all the representative Assemblies, before which

every question of the Church must come, they formed constituent and necessary parts. Here then we see, despite every evasion, that all right and authority in the government of the Church does not necessarily depend on any other principle whatever* than that of representation of the body and members of the Church; and having established this truth as essential to the Presbyterian constitution, as well as to all true ideas of the nature of the Christian Church, we may leave our Free Church friends to maintain on what ground they can, their dogmas as to the absolute, necessary, and invariable distinction between the government of a Christian State, and that of a Christian Church.

I am not surprised to see that in seeking such a ground the Catechism is repeatedly tempted to slur over, or to depart from some fundamental principles of the Presbyterian Reformation. The second section of the fourth and last chapter on the "Judicatories of the Church" evinces the most suspicious desire to keep in the back-ground the ultimate power of the body or *members* of the Church, and to concentrate attention on the *ministerial office*. It talks about the "power of the keys being given by Christ, *not to the members*, but to the Apostles and pastors of the Church." No doubt such language is very harmless affectation in the mouth of a Church whose "Apostles and pastors" all ultimately either derive their authority from popular election, or at all events are only equally associated with those who do—the elders. Indeed the whole section, which continues the same strain of argument through several pages, is most innocuous when we closely examine the distinction it attempts to set up, with the admissions of true Presbyterian principle which of necessity are elsewhere scattered throughout the book. If these were but placed in consecutive order, instead of being brought in piecemeal when they happen to suit the immediate purpose in view, and if they were even closely followed up to their consequences by the plainest reasoning,

* I speak here, as every one else must speak on this question, only of the sub-government of the Church—in short, of an administrative or executive power only. Free Churchmen, in their arguments, frequently assume that all claims of "Government" over the Church, other than their own, involve a *legislative* power, either contrary to, or independent of, the laws of Christ. In short, they speak of the claim of general Assemblies as a claim to govern *according* to the Divine Law, and of all other claims as claims of governing *against* that Law.

one half of the Catechism would be effectually arrayed against the other half. I never appreciated or knew the Providential value of John Knox's principles, and of the mould in which he cast the infant Presbyterian Church, until I was led to trace their effect on the dogmas of his professing followers.

I need hardly explain to those who are accustomed to consider such questions as those which I have been now discussing, that in what I have said in respect to the principle of representation of the Christian people being at the foundation of all Presbyterian Church authority, I do not intimate any opinion that popular election is the best, still less that it is the only legitimate mode of appointing ministers in ordinary times. I entertain no such opinion, but believe, on the contrary, that it is the most inconvenient which could be adopted. The ultimate and abstract right of the Christian community to constitute the officers of its Church, is quite sufficiently maintained under any system of appointment which enjoys either the formal, or the tacit assent of that community. To bring principles of abstract and ultimate right into constant operation in daily life, would be the fruitful source of intolerable confusion. It is indeed of unspeakable importance that they should never be forgotten,—or rather that they should never be suffered to be overlaid. And in times of great religious change, such as that of the Reformation, they could not have been too constantly enforced—too jealously defined. They are anchors to which the vessel ought ever to be safely moored, though she may be allowed any length of cable to swing with the wind and tide. It was in this spirit that John Knox laid down the law that the elders of a congregation, or church, should never hold their office longer than one year, without passing through the form of a new election—to remind them of the source whence they ultimately derived their power. But if the same principle can be borne in perpetual remembrance without this method of enforcement, that method need not be retained. In politics it would be madness to be perpetually agitating the question as to the limits of obedience, and the rights of resistance. Such principles ought to be laid down once for all—laid down in unmistakeable language, and if need be, in unmistakeable deeds. But once established, let them rest. Let them be brought forward again only when counter-principles are in danger of being established, like them abstract and ultimate,—but, unlike them—false. Then indeed let them be roused—let the word of command

be "Up guards, and at them!" No one would object more strongly than I do to the perpetual agitation of popular power either in the appointment of ministers, or in conducting the ordinary government of the Church. But the moment that Church Assemblies, however constituted, attempt to gather round themselves superstitious bulwarks of isolation—the moment they institute abstract distinctions between their own power, and that of other Christian assemblies,—it is time to remind them of their origin—to tight-haul the cable, and prevent drifting.

NOTE K, p. 216.

This most extraordinary specimen of dogmatical extravagance is in the following form:—"Q. 32. Can you give any instances in which man has in this way (the appointment of ordinances) interfered with the Headship of Christ? A. Yes: *holidays have been prescribed*; the rite of confirmation has been introduced; *the sign of the Cross, and godfather and godmother have been connected with baptism*; the cup in the Lord's Supper has been taken from the laity; *kneeling in that ordinance has been required*; and new sacraments have been instituted—all without warrant from Christ." The classification of this passage is admirable,—the impartial justice done to Prelatic and Papistical error!

On the principle that no religious practice or ceremony, however consonant with, or expressive of the spirit of Christianity, can be instituted except on the warrant of some particular text in Scripture,—and that all recorded there, and none else, are lawful, this logic might perhaps be admitted. But may I ask the reverend gentleman to whom we owe this production, whether his own Church acts on this principle consistently? Does he not remember that that Church, for a considerable period of years, rejected the ceremony of ordination—the imposition of hands in the appointment of ministers—as unnecessary? Or need I remind him that there is no ceremony more repeatedly related in the sacred acts of Apostolic times? And does he further remember, that when this ceremony was again adopted, it was adopted as a ceremony merely, and not solemnly restored, as it were, to a place from which it had been sinfully removed? Did John Knox violate the "Headship of Christ" when he dared to judge a Scriptural ceremony in so important a matter as

the consecration of the ministerial office, "not necessary?" Or again, how comes it that the Presbyterian Church has, practically, at least, abandoned the practice so often and so solemnly dwelt upon in Scripture, and by Christ himself,—that of fasting? Has not Presbyterian theology explained away this duty—whether rightly, or not, I do not now judge—and rather opposed it than enjoined it? I conceive that both these points are of infinitely greater importance than the observance of holidays or others of this Catechetical category. But I do not stop here. Can this reverend gentleman point out any Scripture text, of itself authorising or enjoining Infant Baptism? I believe I am not alone in holding that this is a practice which is authorised not so much by any direct command, or precedent in Scripture, as by a just and reasonable application of the principles and promises of Christianity to a special case, which, to judge from a silence so remarkable on so important a point, does not seem to have been directly raised before the sacred writers. The same eminent member of the Free Church, whom I have twice before had occasion to quote, has spoken on this point in a way which indicates a just appreciation of the danger and fanaticism of this text-fever. Speaking of the disposition "to press hard for express Scriptural statement in support of their views and lawfulness of procedure," he says, "It is just the old story of calling for direct Scriptural statement in support of this or that thing—for infant baptism, for the change of the Sabbath in the New Testament, and for the alliance between Church and State. I have been accustomed to protest against that mode of demanding Scriptural proof."* Surely Dr. Candlish must have forgotten his uniform habit when he passed his imprimatur and eulogium upon this weakest of Catechisms. If it had been the work merely of a single minister, I should not have felt any surprise. There have been many previous examples of the length to which party dogmas can be carried under the influence of religious excitement, and of the extravagance with which they may be crammed into discussions with which they stand in no natural connection. I should have been the less surprised, too, since there are many Scotch ministers, who, with all their excellencies of character and zeal of heart, are not men of the most extended views on religious subjects; all their theology being confined to the standards of their own Church, and to the traditionary

* *Witness Newspaper*, of the 5th February, 1848.

dogmas which have come down along with them. But I own myself astonished that such a document should have received the sanction of the Free Church Assembly, where there are not a few who are capable of taking a much wider view. I hold it, therefore, to be not an unfair indication of the fact, that the peculiar dogma of the Free Church is *incapable* of being defended on the *religious or dogmatic basis* on which they attempt to put it without involving assumptions, interpretations, and arguments, necessarily leading to the most manifest extravagance.

THE END.

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